

## ADMISSIONS POLICY - UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

<b>Operational owner:</b>	Head of Admissions
<b>Executive owner:</b>	Director of Marketing, Recruitment & Admissions
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<b>Related documents:</b>	Code of practice for the recognition of prior learning and prior credit: taught programmes Students Under 18 Policy Tier 4 Sponsorship and CAS Issuing Policy Criminal Conviction Policy Disability Policy Terms and Conditions of Offer Admissions Complaints Procedure Data Protection Policy

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1	Laura Sands (Head of Admissions)	August 2021

### 1. Introduction

We are committed to excellence in admissions, and to ensuring that our procedures adhere to the principles of fairness and transparency referred to by the Office for Students guidance. We welcome applications from all candidates with the potential to succeed in higher education. Our admissions practices are designed to ensure that applications are considered on the basis of applicants' achievements and potential to successfully complete their chosen programme of study.

We believe that the University is enhanced by the presence of a diverse student body which includes students both from within the UK and from overseas, and we actively seek to encourage applications from as wide a range of students as possible. We endeavour to ensure that we treat all applications fairly and according to the principles set out in this policy document.

### 2. Scope and purpose

This document is the overarching Undergraduate Admissions Policy for the University of Surrey. It is relevant to applicants applying to study an Integrated Foundation programme or an undergraduate degree at the University of Surrey, from the UK, EU and overseas. It does not cover applications to study:

- An International Foundation Year offered by Study Group ([isc.surrey.ac.uk](http://isc.surrey.ac.uk)).

The policy is intended to provide information for applicants, their parents or advisers, and for staff within the University of Surrey on the principles we apply to applications for undergraduate study. It outlines the University's approach to a number of matters relating to the processing of applications, and explains the institutional, national and legal context within which the admissions function operates.

### **3. Policy and legal context**

The policy should be read in conjunction with other material published by the University as detailed above.

Our approach to admissions takes into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and complies with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

### **4. Principles**

The University of Surrey offers a high-quality learning environment, which supports students to achieve their full potential in the academic discipline and prepares them for professional life. It is University policy that all applicants are considered primarily on merit and their academic potential.

The University's Admissions Policy is committed to:

- Providing transparent, consistent and efficient information
- Selecting applicants who are able to complete the programme as judged by their achievements and potential
- Using reliable assessment methods, including consideration of evidence provided, and, where appropriate, auditions and interviews
- Minimising barriers in line with the University's access and participation plans approved by the Office for Students

Initially, applicants will be considered for entry based on the following criteria:

- Review of prior academic achievement of the applicant
- Review of predicted examination results where results are not yet known
- Review of the personal statement in support of the application
- Review of the referee's assessment of an applicant's ability
- Review of relevant work experience

See Sections 6 and 7 for full details of admissions and selection criteria.

### **5. Roles and responsibilities**

Responsibility for University policy in relation to admissions at undergraduate level lies with the University's Student Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Committee, which reports to the University's Executive Board.

The Chief Operating Officer and Vice-Chancellor, together with the University Executive Board, have responsibility for setting the entry criteria for the admission of students and will annually confirm the minimum entry requirements for all levels of provision.

The role of the University of Surrey Admissions department is to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented in a fair and consistent way in line with relevant legislation and University strategy.

The Admissions department make decisions on individual applications for most programmes, applying established criteria. Admissions Tutors make decisions on individual applications in cases where these decisions cannot be made by the Admissions department.

## **6. Admissions criteria and selection principles**

We update our entry requirements on an annual basis in light of changing academic requirements. Although we try not to change our entry requirements after our prospectus has been printed, occasionally late changes are made. This means that sometimes our requirements do not reflect the information published in the hard copy of our undergraduate prospectus. We therefore recommend that applicants look at the information in the course listings on our online programme pages as the source of the most up-to-date information. Our academic entry requirements are also published on the [UCAS website](#).

We aim to select those applicants who are likely to succeed academically and benefit from our programmes. Aptitude for an individual programme is the primary criterion for selection and an academic decision will always be reached on an application before other factors such as criminal convictions are taken in to account.

Our selection criteria and process ensure the following:

- Decisions are fair and consistent in relation to the published entry criteria
- Evidence of a candidate's potential to succeed on the programme is taken into account
- Where appropriate, Admissions staff may consider contextual factors in relation to an application
- We operate a transparent selection process. Selection may be on the basis of an application form (with or without additional required written work or a portfolio) or on application form plus audition/interview. Where interviews or auditions form part of the selection process, candidates will be informed of the process in advance
- We communicate outcomes to the applicant in a timely way. The University will communicate via email and Surrey Self-Service and, where applicable, via UCAS

Before applying applicants should consider the following points:

- The details of programme-specific entry criteria on the programme pages of the University website and on the UCAS website
- Prior to entry, minimum levels must be obtained in GCSE (or equivalent) qualifications in English Language, Mathematics and in some cases Science. The details of these requirements are published on the programme pages of the University website
- Applicants must provide evidence that they possess at least the minimum level of English Language proficiency as set by the University Student Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Committee. Details of the English Language requirements are published on the programme pages of the University website.
- Applicants who have non-standard qualifications or have work experience they wish to have assessed may be considered on an individual basis in line with the general aims and principles of the Admissions and RPL/RPC policies (Recognition of prior learning or credit). For further details please refer to the [Code of practice for the recognition of prior learning and prior credit: taught programmes](#)
- Entry onto some programmes of study requires applicants to meet additional non-academic conditions. These conditions usually apply to programmes that have professional requirements and may include Disclosure & Barring and Fitness to Study clearance. Where

such clearance is required, information will be provided in programme literature and advice given to applicants.

### English Language

All applicants must meet the University's minimum English language level through the most recent evidence of one of the following prior to admission;

-An approved Level 2 equivalent qualification including country equivalent

-An approved English Language test taken within 2 years prior to the start of the course

-Successful completion of the appropriate Pre-sessional English Language programme offered by the University of Surrey, provided it is completed immediately preceding the main degree programme or with exceptional agreement.

- Successful completion of an English Language assessment at the required level according to a University partnership agreement.

Applicants can also be exempt from completing one of the above if they are a national of a Majority English Speaking Country (for further details please visit or have studied for a minimum of one full academic year, and successfully completed within the past five years a qualification at least equivalent to a UK Bachelors taught in English. For further details please visit the [language webpage](#).

In some cases, a student will present a variety of pieces of evidence, sometimes conflicting, regarding English language ability.

The principle here is to judge the student on the **most recent** piece of evidence, except that an IELTS taken no more than 6 months before the end of a degree course takes precedence over degree study. Where a student registers for an IELTS test but subsequently withdraws without taking the test, they are judged on the other criteria and evidence of the cancelled test will be required.

#### **6.1. Extenuating circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances are non-academic factors which may include illness, family circumstances, personal responsibility or instability affecting the school or the college where these may have had an adverse effect on a student's educational attainment.

Applicants should first submit their extenuating circumstances to their exam boards for [English](#) consideration and await a decision from the boards before contacting the University. The University will usually only consider extenuating circumstances where an exam board has not already made special dispensation post-examination to a student's grades. In these cases, applicants should contact [headofadmissions@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:headofadmissions@surrey.ac.uk) confirming which exam board the qualifications were taken.

All extenuating circumstances will be dealt with on an individual basis and with the strictest confidence, but it is important to note that submitting extenuating circumstances does not guarantee that the University will be able to accept applicants who do not meet the conditions of their offer.

#### **6.2. Interviews and auditions**

Some academic schools and departments may use interviews or auditions to assess applications. Where this is the case, they may interview or audition all candidates whose UCAS applications meet their academic criteria, or they may interview only a proportion of candidates, for example where applicants are presenting non-standard qualifications, or where the applicant is a mature candidate.

### **6.3. Deferred entry**

It is not possible to defer an application for our Health Science, Dietetics and Veterinary Medicine and Science programmes and the majority of courses in Guildford School of Acting (GSA). This is due to the limited number of places available each year and possible changes to the professional requirements each cycle. For our other programmes, applicants may indicate on their UCAS application that they wish to defer entry for a year, or may contact us in writing later in the application cycle, but no later than 31 August. Applicants seeking to defer their entry should be aware that any offer conditions must be met by the end of the application cycle for the year in which they submitted their UCAS application.

Applications which indicate at the outset that they are for deferred entry will be considered against the entry criteria for the year in which they apply, except for any interview programmes that have professional requirements such as Health Sciences, Dietetics or Veterinary Medicine. Applicants may only be considered for a bursary or scholarship for the cycle in which their application is received. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we do not normally permit applicants who apply to us through the Clearing process to defer their entry.

We do not normally permit applicants to defer entry for more than one year. Applicants who defer for more than one year are usually expected to make a new application through UCAS.

### **6.4. Direct entry**

Applications may be considered from applicants who are seeking direct entry. However, we will need to be satisfied that the applicant has covered all the core material contained in the syllabus for the previous year(s). It is therefore important that applicants who wish to be considered for direct entry send us copies of transcripts of their previous studies and any other supporting information. Applicants may be required to attend an interview or submit a piece of work as part of the selection process.

Applicants should contact Admissions before applying as not all programmes are able to accept direct entrants.

Further information can be found in the [Code of practice for the recognition of prior learning and prior credit: taught programmes](#).

### **6.5. Plagiarism**

UCAS carries out checks on each personal statement for potential plagiarism (the copying of material without appropriate acknowledgement). Where evidence of plagiarism is found, UCAS will notify both the applicant concerned and the University of Surrey. The University reserves the right to reject applicants who are identified through this process.

### **6.6. Feedback**

The University will provide feedback on request, within the constraints of resources available. There may be cases where highly specific or tailored feedback may not be possible. Applicants must be aware that feedback will only be given directly to them, unless the University has received written permission that the applicant is willing for the matter to be discussed with another individual.

## **6.7. Applicant conduct**

Applicants and their representatives should note that the University will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour or language towards its employees or other applicants during the admissions process. Hostile or otherwise inappropriate behaviour or language, whether expressed verbally or in writing, will be viewed seriously and may adversely affect the consideration of an application, appeal or complaint. Such action may include the withdrawal of an offer or the rejection of an application.

## **6.8. Age on entry**

Students aged 16 or 17 at enrolment are usually welcome to apply, however, this can differ by programme, as some programmes of study are bound by external professional or placement requirements concerning age. Offers for undergraduate programmes are normally made on the basis of national qualifications which will be obtained by the age of 17/18. Applicants who will be under the age of 16 on entry are not permitted to enrol at the University. Any such applicants will, where appropriate, be offered a deferred entry place. If this is not possible the application will be rejected. There is no upper age limit.

The University does not accept an in loco parentis responsibility for children (i.e. those under 18 years of age at entry). The University does, however, recognise that it has special duties of care towards children and is committed to practice that protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm. The University seeks to take every reasonable step to safeguard children by adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour and following appropriate procedures for the vetting and training of people who work directly with children and young people. Further details can be found here.

## **7. Fair access**

### **7.1. Mature**

The University encourages applications from mature students, believing that mature students make an important contribution to university life through their range of experience and qualifications. Anyone beginning an undergraduate programme who is aged 21 or over is classified as a mature student. Mature applicants may satisfy the entry requirements through standard academic qualifications. However, the University gives careful consideration to those who can provide evidence of their commitment to academic study through a range of other awards and experience.

### **7.2. Widening Participation and Outreach**

The University of Surrey has a strong commitment to providing opportunities for talented students from all backgrounds. The Widening Participation and Outreach teams are involved in a variety of projects and initiatives which aim to redress inequality by providing targeted support to under-represented groups.

Further information on the University's activities in this area may be found at: [surrey.ac.uk/schools-colleges](https://surrey.ac.uk/schools-colleges)

The University produces an access and participation plan each year, which represents the University's overarching widening participation strategy. A copy of the University's access and participation plan can be found on the website for the Office for Students at: [officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans](https://officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans)

### **7.2.1 Contextual Admissions**

Contextual Admissions refers to the additional information to academic qualifications such as school performance data and socio-economic markers that helps universities identify an individual applicant's potential to succeed in higher education. Applicants that meet one or more of our criteria listed in our Contextual Admissions webpage will likely receive up to one grade reduction of their offer.

### **7.2.2 In2Surrey scheme**

The [In2Surrey scheme](#) is part of the University's Widening Participation programme. The scheme is designed for students who have the ability and desire to study at the University of Surrey and achieve their goals regardless of their personal circumstances and can lead to a reduced offer and other benefits. The In2Surrey Scheme cannot be used alongside any other grade reduction scheme.

### **7.3. Applicants with a disability**

The University of Surrey is committed to equality of opportunity for all of its students and encourages applications from students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties. The University's policy of equal opportunity ensures that all applicants are considered on the same academic grounds. It is important, however, that applicants with a disability make this known to the University so that appropriate arrangements for reasonable adjustments to support their education and learning can be made. A procedure for exploring all possible reasonable adjustments with the participation of the applicant will be followed. In exceptional cases, the University may require further advice from health professionals. Occasionally, other criteria may need to be considered, such as the requirements of professional bodies. For example, applicants to nursing programmes must undergo an occupational health check.

### **7.4. Applicants who have been in local authority care**

The University is able to offer specific support to care leavers. Further details can be found on the University website [surrey.ac.uk/schools-colleges/parents-and-carers](http://surrey.ac.uk/schools-colleges/parents-and-carers)

## **8. Student visas**

The UK government operates a points-based immigration system for all overseas students. Further details at [gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)

The University is licensed with the Home Office as a Student Route Visa Sponsor. To apply for a Student route Visa, applicants must have a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS). The University is under no legal obligation to sponsor any individual and exercises caution with respect to issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to not risk its status as a Student Route Visa sponsor.

CAS are issued in accordance with the Student Route Visa Sponsorship and CAS Issuing Policy, available at: [surrey.ac.uk/apply/policies](http://surrey.ac.uk/apply/policies)

## **9. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)**

It is mandatory for some applicants who need entry clearance to study in the United Kingdom and who are applying to certain programmes to have an ATAS certificate. We will not be able to issue a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) or register applicants on to the programme until their clearance has been received. For further details, please visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website. [gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme](http://gov.uk/academic-technology-approval-scheme)

## **10. Criminal convictions**

The University aims to select those applicants who are likely to succeed academically and benefit from its programmes. Having a Criminal Conviction (as defined in the [Criminal Convictions Policy](#)) will not usually prevent an applicant from gaining admission to the University.

A failure to disclose any Relevant Criminal Conviction(s) (as defined in the Criminal Convictions Policy) is taken seriously and could result in: the withdrawal of any existing or subsequent offer of a place; or to the termination of any subsequent registration in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Regulations or Regulations for Fitness to Practise.

Please see the [Criminal Convictions Policy](#) for further details.

## **11. Fraudulent and misleading applications**

The University follows the UCAS rules and procedures concerning fraudulent applications and liaises closely with the UCAS Verification Unit to prevent fraud. We will refer to UCAS any application that we suspect to be fraudulent or to contain fraudulent information.

We reserve the right to cancel an application or withdraw any offer made on the basis of an application which we have found to be fraudulent. Any student found to have been admitted on the basis of fraudulent information may have their studies terminated. International students who have been admitted on the basis of fraudulent information may have their studies terminated and also be reported to the relevant government agency.

For more information on UCAS procedures relating to the detection of fraudulent applications, please see the UCAS website at [ucas.com](https://ucas.com).

## **12. Data protection**

The University holds and processes personal data and sensitive personal data or special categories of data about its current, past, or prospective, applicants, students, alumni and others who are defined as subjects under applicable data protection laws. This is done in accordance with the applicable data protection laws. The applicable data protection laws currently include the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Detailed information relating to how the University handles the personal data of applicants, students and alumni can be found on [our website](#).

## **13. Complaints**

The University of Surrey is committed to delivering a high quality, efficient and fair admissions service in line with its selection criteria and policy. In the event that an applicant wishes to make a formal complaint, the University will follow a procedure which ensures that all complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, consistently and with due regard to the Equalities Act. If a complaint is upheld, the University will take appropriate action. If a complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated clearly to the applicant.

An applicant does not have the right to appeal against an academic decision not to offer them a place at the University, as long as the decision can be shown to have been reached fairly and in accordance with the University's published entry requirements and selection criteria.

The University will only correspond with the applicant, unless the applicant has provided written permission for the University to discuss the application with another person. Full details of the complaints procedure can be found [on our website](#).

#### **14. Monitoring and review**

The Admissions Policy is reviewed annually by the University's Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing Committee and the Senior Management Team for Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions.