



Northumbria University Admissions Policy September 2016

Prepared and reviewed by:

Miriam Clift
Admissions Manager
Northumbria University

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1. Introduction

The Admissions Policy sets out the framework and key principles guiding the operation and management of the admissions process for taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across the University and at Northumbria University London Campus, and provides the framework for admissions practices relating to applications dealt with by the Home Admissions Service in Marketing and the International Admissions Service based within International Development. It is intended to provide guidance to University staff, applicants, parents, teachers and any other interested parties on the University's procedures for admitting students.

It has been developed in conjunction with key staff across the University and reflects relevant legislation and good practice provided by higher education organisations.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Handbook of Student Regulations, particularly the Student Enrolment Conditions at section 2, details of which can be found on our website at www.northumbria.ac.uk/handbook. Applicants should read these carefully before accepting any offer of a place and contact the Admissions Office on 0191 227 3341 if they have any questions or queries relating to them.

2. Aims

Recruitment and admissions supports the goals and aims of the University as laid out in Vision 2025 and the Corporate Strategy 2013 – 18 which can be found on our website here:

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/our-vision/>

The aims outlined in the Corporate Strategy are underpinned with the following objectives;

- Deliver high quality recruitment and admissions services for enquirers, applicants and students which will enhance their experience throughout the full student journey and prepare them for graduation and employment and which will enhance the national and international profile and reputation of the University;
- Deliver admissions services which are fair, transparent, consistently applied and well-communicated;
- Achieve University Widening Participation, Fair Access and recruitment targets through the provision of effective outreach, recruitment, conversion and information services which enable the recruitment of a well-balanced body of high quality students;
- Deliver high quality support services to students at every stage of their journey which are: based on detailed research and analysis; subject to rigorous monitoring, evaluation and review; and are fully supportive of and compliant with the key principles of equality and diversity.

3. Principles

The University values and seeks diversity in the student community and recognises that University life is enriched by a student body that is reflective of the wider community and includes students from the UK, the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and overseas. Applications are welcome from motivated candidates of all social and ethnic backgrounds who are

likely to benefit from and contribute to the challenging and stimulating learning environment that exists at the University.

We are committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and our aim is to select candidates who have the potential, ability and motivation to benefit from their intended programme of study and the wider experience of university life.

For each individual, all known relevant factors bearing on previous and likely attainment will be taken properly into account and particular, individual needs are considered with sensitivity. Each admissions decision will be made with integrity, equity and professionalism with each candidate considered on the basis of their own merits, abilities and potential (regardless of gender, ethnic or social background, disability, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant criteria) in line with entry requirements.

The University is committed to fair and transparent admissions and this policy is informed by published good practice guidance, in particular the 5 Principles of the *'Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice Report' 2004* and the Quality Assurance Agency *'UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality Chapter 2: Admissions'*.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Academic Faculties and the Home and International Admissions Services, along with other areas of the University, work in partnership to provide effective admissions services.

The University operates a centralised admissions service for full-time undergraduate and postgraduate applications. Applications from UK and EU students are managed by the Admissions Service within Marketing. Applications from overseas and for applicants to research programmes are managed by the International Admissions Service based within International Development.

Overall responsibility for Admissions and the meeting of University targets and objectives lies with the Director of Marketing.

5. Information for Enquirers and Applicants

The University is committed to providing accurate admissions and course information which is clear, comprehensive and easily accessible for enquires and applicants. This includes, but is not limited to, information on length of course, module content and fees.

Admissions and course information, including detailed information on entry requirements is published in our undergraduate and postgraduate prospectus and on our website at www.northumbria.ac.uk/coursesearch.

We aim to provide accurate and up to date information in all of our print publications, but as these are published up to 18 months before the start of a course applicants should always refer to our website for the most up-to-date information.

6. Restructured and Discontinued courses

While every effort is made to offer the courses advertised in the University prospectus, website, external websites and via any Clearing House, on occasion it is necessary for the University to withdraw or discontinue course provision, or to make changes to courses which it believes will benefit students.

When this occurs the University will inform all applicants promptly and will endeavour to offer an alternative programme where possible. Applicants who apply via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) will have the opportunity to look for another course elsewhere (subject to places being available), change their firm and insurance choices (where these have been made) in negotiation with one of their other university choices, or choose to withdraw from the choice at Northumbria altogether.

Applicants to postgraduate and part-time courses will be offered another course where this is possible.

The University cannot accept any liability for loss of income, expenses incurred or other inconvenience as a result of its having to withdraw a course.

7. Entry Requirements

Entry requirements for each course will be published on our website at www.northumbria.ac.uk. In addition information about undergraduate full-time programmes will be published on the UCAS website www.ucas.com and for postgraduate teacher training courses on the website of the UCAS Teacher Training (UTT) at www.utt.ac.uk.

Published entry criteria will take account of as many qualifications as possible but may not be completely comprehensive because of the diverse nature of the applicant body. Applicants from the UK/EU/EEA who are unsure if their individual profile meets our entry requirements should seek advice from the Home Admissions Service at er.admissions@northumbria.ac.uk or on 0191 227 3341.

Applicants from outside of the UK/EU/EEA should contact our International Admissions Service on 00 44 191 227 4274.

Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate an adequate proficiency in English. For most undergraduate programmes this should be IELTS 6.0 with no individual component lower than 5.5 for entry to first year. Entry to most undergraduate programmes at a year other than first year requires an IELTS score of 6.5, with no component lower than 6.0. Entry to postgraduate study usually requires a minimum IELTS score of 6.5, with no individual component lower than 6.0. There may be individual variations for some programmes and you are advised to check our course pages or with the appropriate admissions office for advice.

Individual programmes of study may specify non-academic entry requirements in addition to the minimum academic requirement (for example the need for work experience, health clearance, enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check etc).

The University welcomes applications from those with previous academic credit. Such applicants may be admitted as students to any approved appropriate point in the course concerned at the discretion of the Faculty offering the course.

The University also welcomes applications from those who have significant work or life experience and who may not necessarily meet the published academic requirements for their chosen course. Applicants will be required to demonstrate evidence of motivation, potential, knowledge and ability to study the course of their choice, and the University must be satisfied that an applicant's work or life experience is equivalent to the qualifications that other applicants will be studying towards or have already achieved. The University will only offer a place where there is evidence that an applicant is capable of completing their chosen course with a good final classification, and as such, the University reserves the right to exercise academic judgement and discretion when assessing any prior attainment.

Entry requirements are reviewed on an annual basis and are updated if necessary. They are also subject to changes in Government policy. The University ensures that the most up-to-date information is clearly displayed on its website.

8. The Application Process

If you are applying for a full-time undergraduate degree application is via UCAS. The application cycle opens on 1 September and the closing date for 'on time' applications is 18.00 on 15 January. The University is committed to considering all applicants who apply by this date equally (this is sometimes referred to as 'equal academic consideration'). The University has the right to close courses to applicants who apply after 15 January if it thinks it has received enough applications to fill its available spaces.

Enquirers/potential applicants will be informed of full-time undergraduate course closures via our website and the UCAS website.

If you are applying for a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) you must apply through UCAS Teacher Training (UTT). The application cycle opens in November.

Applicants to the Legal Practice Course (LPC) must apply to the Legal Practice Course Central Applications Board (LPCCAB) – further details are available at www.lawcabs.ac.uk.

Applicants to the Bar Professional Training Course should make application through the Bar Student Application Service at www.barsas.com

Applicants to all other programmes, including postgraduate taught and part-time courses should apply using the University application form available at www.northumbria.ac.uk.

9. Assessment and Selection

The University is committed to fair and equal consideration of all applications.

Admission will be determined by an assessment of the potential of the student to contribute to and benefit from their proposed course of study and by academic, personal, professional and other relevant criteria and no potential student will be excluded for entry to any programme as a result of discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, nationality, ethnic or social origin, race, religion or creed.

The University does not currently consider any contextual data when making admissions decisions nor do we ask for completion of an Admissions Test (for example the Law National Admissions Test) for entry. We also do not currently ask for specific grades from specific units from GCE Advanced level.

Applications must be completed in full by each applicant. Decision making is delayed and applicants risk rejection if all relevant information is not included on the application form. The University reserves the right not to re-consider an applicant who has been rejected because vital information needed to make a decision has been omitted from the form.

Some courses interview as part of the selection process. All applicants who apply to courses in architecture, art and design, education, health, performance and social work must attend a compulsory interview as part of the selection process. Not all applicants are called for interview and it is important that you focus in your personal statement on the reasons why you have chosen a particular programme, the skills you believe you can bring to the course and any work experience you may have had to support your choice. More information on the selection criteria for interview can be found on the course page of the course you are interested in on the University website.

Unless otherwise stated, the usual minimum GCSE (or GCE O level) requirement for entry is 5 at grade C or above, including English language and mathematics. Some courses may ask for a grade higher than a C, or ask for additional specific subjects (for example science). Applicants who do not have English and mathematics in particular should contact Admissions for advice.

Applicants studying a foundation year will be considered for entry to the first year of an undergraduate degree where an appropriate subject is being studied.

Applicants studying for a qualification leading to the award of Foundation Degree (FD) or Higher National Diploma (HND) will be considered for entry to the second year of an undergraduate programme where this is a suitable subject match. The University also offer specific 'top-up' degrees of one year duration in business and computing for those students who have studied a relevant FD or HND.

If the University does not consider an applicant suitable for the course for which they have applied, the applicant may be considered for an alternative, related course. Applicants made a change of course offer will receive a communication from the University explaining this, which will clearly state the steps that need to be taken to accept or decline the change.

The University does not discriminate in its selection process against applicants resitting one or more qualifications.

You may apply for deferred entry and your application will be considered along with all other applications. The University will not consider any applicant who requests deferral for more than one year. If you wish to defer for more than one year you will have to reapply using the appropriate application process. Applicants to BA (Hons) Primary Education will not be considered for deferred entry because they need relevant and up to date experience of working in a mainstream UK primary school immediately prior to starting the course.

If you apply to the University during an application cycle and your application is unsuccessful, your application will not be considered again for the same course during the same application period. If you wish to apply for a related or different course during the same year then you must contact the relevant Admissions Service (depending on if you are a Home/EU/EEA or international students) for advice and guidance prior to submitting a new application. You may apply for the same course again the following year.

Some courses (specifically in the health care professions), have more than one intake a year (September and March). If you are offered a place on a course which has two start dates, while every effort will be made to accommodate the start date of your choice, the University reserves the right to allocate one to you in line with its own needs and requirements.

10. Applicant Communications and Applicant Data

10.1 Applicant Communications

Applicants who apply through UCAS or UTT will receive notification of the decision on their application through Track. All decisions can be viewed on Track and it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they have read and understand the conditions of their offer before accepting a place. Applicants unsure of the meaning of their offer conditions should contact the Admissions Office for clarification.

Applicants will also receive a formal, written offer letter from the University.

Applicants may also receive individual and relevant communications from other parts of the University, particularly our Accommodation, Marketing and Student Support and Wellbeing services. This may be by email, telephone, SMS and letter, and applicants are responsible for ensuring that their contact details are kept up-to-date via UCAS Track (if they have applied via UCAS or UTT) or directly with the University.

10.2 Applicant Data

The University is committed to keeping personal data safe and personal data is processed in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. All members of University staff are required to complete data protection training annually.

For information on how the University collects and uses personal data please refer to section 16 of the Handbook of Student Regulations which can be found at www.northumbria.ac.uk/handbook.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 the University will not enter into discussion relating to applications with anyone other than the applicant, unless the applicant gives express written permission nominating a named person who can discuss their application on their behalf.

11. Specific Applicant Groups

11.1 Applicants who declare a disability

Applications from candidates with disabilities will be considered in line with the University's commitment to promoting equal opportunities, subject to professional practitioner requirements where they apply.

All applicants declaring a disability will receive an email from Disability Support asking them to contact the service for further information and advice. Full details on what is available can be found on our website at http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/stud_serv/disability/

Decisions regarding admission will be made independently of the assessment of the candidates individual support needs.

If the University is unable to meet additional needs, or can only do so by compromising the learning experience which would disadvantage the applicant, the University, through its Disability Support Service, will inform the applicant immediately the situation is apparent

11.2 Applicants under the age of 18 on entry

Applications to all courses will be assessed using the standard entry criteria for each course, irrespective of the applicant's age on entry.

It is recognised that, in law, anyone under the age of 18 is a minor and applicants who are under 18 should be aware that they are applying to study in an adult environment and there may be a small number of limitations for them at the University while they are under 18.

11.3 Applicants in care

There is specific support in place for care leavers, which covers recruitment, admission, and ongoing support for this group of learners once they are enrolled. This includes guaranteed year-round accommodation.

12. Applicants who declare a criminal conviction(s)

Applications from candidates with criminal convictions will be carefully considered and the University has a procedure in place for dealing with applicants who declare a criminal conviction. Applicants to courses in teaching, health and social work, or any course involving work with children or vulnerable adults must disclose any criminal convictions, including spent sentences and cautions (including verbal cautions) and bindover orders. Candidates to these courses will also be required to undergo police clearance for entry and will need to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enhanced disclosure. If offered a place this will be sent to you a few months before commencement of your programme.

Applicants must, upon request, provide full details of all relevant convictions. A panel of senior University staff and others as appropriate considers the admission of applicants with criminal convictions and while every decision is made taking into consideration the individual circumstances surrounding each case, the University reserves the right to refuse entry to any applicant with a criminal conviction which may jeopardise the security, safety or reputation of the University or its community, or where there are relevant professional criteria/professional body requirements which apply.

Applicants who are convicted of a relevant offence (or in the case of applicants to health, social work and teaching courses, or any course involving work with children or vulnerable adults - any criminal conviction) *after application* must inform the University immediately in writing, providing full details of the offence so the criminal convictions procedure can be followed. You should only do this if your application has not already been rejected.

This may not necessarily mean that any offer of a place is withdrawn, but should the nature of the offence mean that the security, safety or reputation of the University or its community is jeopardised, or there are professional criteria that cannot be met, then the University reserves the right to withdraw the offer and will counsel the applicant accordingly.

13. Fees Status Assessments

Applicants are required to give information about their nationality and residential status as part of their application. The University will use this information to decide whether applicants should pay Home or Overseas tuition fees. If the University considers an applicant's fee status to be unclear from the information provided, a fee status questionnaire will be sent to the applicant via email. Applicants who fail to complete and return the questionnaire together with all the supporting documentation required by the given deadline will be assessed as overseas for the purposes of fees and their application will be processed on that basis. Should the applicant then send in additional documentation and their fees status changes to home, it will only be possible to offer a place if any remain available.

All fee status classification decisions will be made in line with Home Office guidance by experienced members of admissions staff within the Admissions Service.

14. International Applicants

Guidance on the application procedure for international applicants and details of how to apply for a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) can be found at:

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international/international-admissions/>

Specific terms and conditions for international applicants can be found at:

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/international/international-admissions/application-forms-guides/>

Any queries regarding this should be directed to the International Admissions Service on 00 44 191 227 4274 or er.internationaladmissions@northumbria.ac.uk.

15. Similarity Detection and Prevention of Fraud

15.1 Similarity Detection

Applicants who apply via a Clearing House will have their application screened by similarity detection software. Each incoming personal statement is compared against a library of personal statements already held by UCAS/UTT, and a library of sample statements collected from a variety of websites and other sources.

Any statements with a potential similarity level of at least 10% are reviewed by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service. Applications with a similarity level of 31% or more are automatically referred to the University and applicants are also informed.

We may require any applicant reported to us as having a similarity level of 31% to submit a new personal statement and will contact as appropriate any applicant who is required to complete this.

15.2 Prevention of Fraud

The University takes the issues surrounding fraudulent applications very seriously. Fraud falls into three main categories:

- Applications from those intent on securing a place by deception;

- Applications from those intent on securing bursaries, grants, loans and scholarships by deception;
- Applications from those intent on securing a student visa for the purpose of entering the UK by deception.

Clearing Houses and the University follow anti-fraud procedures to detect and prevent fraudulent applications.

Where an applicant is suspected of submitting a fraudulent application the University will write to the applicant to:

- Inform him/her of the discrepancies in their application or the lack of information identified;
- Request clarification, further information and any supporting documentation required by a deadline;
- Advise the applicant of the consequences if the deadline is not met and;
- Advise the applicant if any other organisation is to be contacted about the application.

In addition the University will inform the relevant Clearing House who may undertake their own investigation.

If no response is received from the applicant by the required deadline a further letter will be sent. This will reiterate the request as specified in the original letter and will give a second deadline.

If no response is received after the second deadline a final letter will be sent informing the applicant of the University's decision to withdraw their application.

No appeal against this decision will be considered.

Should an applicant falsely declare their qualifications or any other part of their application when they apply, including the omission of information relating to qualifications studied (whether or not these were completed) or using fraudulent certificates or evidence the University reserves the right to cancel or withdraw any offer made on the basis of this application. If a student has enrolled before this false declaration is discovered the University reserves the right to terminate the student's studies at the University. If the student has completed the course before the false declaration is discovered the University has the right to revoke the award and notify the appropriate bodies.

16. Feedback, appeals and complaints

16.1 Feedback

Applicants who apply via UCAS or UTT will be sent a brief reason why their application has been unsuccessful which can be viewed via Track. Applicants who require further explanation may request additional feedback in writing.

Applicants to other courses where application is not through a Clearing House such as UCAS will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

Any applicant requiring feedback (in addition to that already received) on the reason why their application has been unsuccessful should make their request to the relevant Admissions Service

within ten days of receipt of the decision. It may not be possible for the University to deal with a request if it is received outside of this time frame.

The University will endeavour to respond to all requests within 28 days of receipt.

All requests for feedback should be made in writing to the relevant Admissions Service.

For Home/EU/EEA applicants this can be by email to er.admissions@northumbria.ac.uk or by post to:

Admissions
Northumbria University
Northumberland Building
Northumberland Road
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE1 8ST

For international applicants the contact details are:

er.internationaladmissions@northumbria.ac.uk or by post to:

Admissions
International Development
Library Building
Sandyford Road
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
NE1 8ST

You should provide your full name, UCAS/UTT/University ID and the course for which you applied. The University will acknowledge all requests made.

16.2 Appeals

Applicants have the right to make a formal appeal against an unsuccessful decision. Applicants should have received feedback from the University before submitting an appeal. Appeals must be based on one of the following criteria:

- 1) The applicant believes that they have received discriminatory treatment compared to other applicants for the same course with the same entry prerequisites.
- 2) The applicant believes that the University has not adhered to its own stated procedures for the processing of UCAS applications.
- 3) The applicant has additional information to provide to the University which was unavailable at the point of application. (If this information was available at the point of application but was not included on the UCAS application form, this will not be accepted as sufficient grounds for appeal. If additional information is provided at a time when the course applied for is already full, the University is under no obligation to re-consider the application.)

Applicants have no right of appeal on academic grounds and there is no right of appeal against the professional judgement of those making a decision on an application. Any appeals that are not based on one of the specific criteria listed above will be automatically unsuccessful.

Applicants wishing to submit an appeal should follow the University Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure which is available from the relevant Admissions Service.

16.3 Complaints

Applicants have the right to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received from the University or if they feel that there have been serious procedural errors in the processing of their application.

Applicants wishing to submit a complaint should follow the University Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure which is available from the relevant Admissions Service.

17. Confirmation and Enrolment

Confirmation decisions are made based on the information provided by UCAS via the Awarding Body Linkage (ABL) process where the applicant has a conditional offer based on qualifications that are provided in the ABL.

If results are not received via the ABL it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that they send the Admissions Office a copy of their results.

Applicants must usually meet the conditions of their offer by 31st August in the year in which they apply.

If at Confirmation an applicant does not meet the offer conditions that were made to them, but meets those for a similar course at the University or one of its subsidiaries (if there are spaces available), they will automatically be considered for this and will receive a specific communication from the University explaining this, which will clearly state what steps they need to take to accept or decline this alternative offer. They will also receive a separate communication from UCAS reiterating this information.

If at Confirmation an applicant does not meet the offer conditions made to them, and cannot be offered an alternative course, an unsuccessful decision will be sent to UCAS. Applicants will be able to see this decision on UCAS Track. Depending on the decision made by the institution holding the applicant's other choice at this point, UCAS will advise on the next steps as appropriate.

Once an applicant's place has been confirmed at the University they will automatically be sent communications enabling them to enrol online.

18. Training and Support

The University is committed to providing a professional admissions service and to ensuring that all admissions staff are fully trained in procedures and are kept aware of any changes in policy. The Admissions Service provides training on request to both academic and professional services staff, covering UCAS rules and procedures, University policies and procedures, and University admissions software. The Admissions Service also provides training on Confirmation and Clearing processes and software systems on an annual basis.

Professional services staff are encouraged to attend conferences and training sessions organised by external bodies such as UCAS and SPA in order to develop their admissions knowledge and keep up to date with changes to Government policy and UCAS procedures.

19. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that it continues to support the mission and strategic objectives of the University whilst taking particular account of changes to relevant legislation; the performance of the University against published service standards and widening participation targets; findings of market research activity; changes and best practice developments in the sector and the changing needs of applicants.