

A2: ADMISSION

INTRODUCTION

The entry requirements for each course of the University are defined in terms of stated qualifications or their equivalents, and are intended to facilitate assessment of the candidate's ability to meet the demands of the course. Where Recognition of Prior Learning is permitted as a route for entry, responsibility rests with the applicant for making the claim to relevant knowledge and skills and also for supporting the claim with appropriate evidence. The University may require an applicant to submit to an entrance assessment. Admission to an appropriate point in a course may be permitted where evidence exists that an applicant has fulfilled particular progression requirements of the course.

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REGULATION

- 1. PRINCIPLES OF ADMISSION**
 - 1.1 The principal academic criterion for determining a candidate's suitability for admission to a course within the University is that there is a reasonable expectation that he/she will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course, meet any relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements and achieve the standard required for the award.
 - 1.2 The admissions policy of the University seeks to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants.
 - 1.3 All applicants shall be required to declare on his/her application form whether he/she is currently an enrolled student of the University or has previously been so. Failure to accurately complete the declaration may result in disciplinary action being taken in

accordance with *Regulation A3, Section 2: Student Misconduct Procedure*, and may result in termination of enrolment.

- 1.4 Admission to more than one course of the University shall be subject to the approval of the relevant School(s).

2. ENROLMENT

- 2.1 Each student of the University shall enrol at the time of initial admission to a course and re-enrol every twelve months during the period in which he/she undertakes the course*.

- 2.2 To be eligible to enrol every twelve months, a student shall have either:

- (i) complied with the requirements for student progress prescribed for his/her particular course and have received notification of permission to proceed to the subsequent stage of the course, or
- (ii) received notification of permission to re-attend the whole or part of the course for which he/she is enrolled.

- 2.3 A student who enrolls for a course of full-time or part-time study leading to an award of the University, or who enrolls for a course offered by the University but leading to an award of another body, shall be deemed to be an enrolled student of the University and shall receive an enrolment card.

- 2.4 As part of the enrolment procedure a student, including those designated as associate students, shall formally acknowledge that he/she accepts and will abide by the University Regulations.

3. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

- 3.1 In addition to the requirements of [paragraph 1.1](#) of this Regulation, the minimum level of attainment normally required for entry to the start of courses leading to awards at first degree level shall be equivalent to passes in five subjects of the Scottish Qualifications Certificate of which three shall be at Higher grade, or in four subjects all at Higher grade. The equivalent GCE/GCSE requirement shall be two passes at Advanced level in the General Certificate of Education (GCE A level) supported by passes in three other subjects in the General Certificate of School Education (GCSE).

- 3.2 The minimum level of attainment normally required for entry to the start of a course leading to University awards of Certificate/Diploma of Higher Education shall be equivalent to passes in five subjects of the Scottish Qualifications Certificate of which two shall be at Higher Grade.

- 3.3 Prospective entrants may offer other patterns of passes equivalent to these levels of attainment. The University also accepts a variety of vocational, professional and other qualifications for entry purposes such as Scottish Qualifications Authority qualifications,

* Or such other period as agreed between the Course/Programme Management Team and the University's Student Administration Department

EdExcel awards, SVQ/NVQ, Open University qualifications, access and foundation courses, international and overseas qualifications.

- 3.4 Some courses may require entrants to have reached a standard above the minimum level for entry in one or more specified subjects; candidates for entry should consult the entrance requirements for courses contained in the University prospectus.

English Language Proficiency

- 3.5 The language of instruction at the University is English and proficiency in speaking, listening to, reading and writing English is essential. Students whose first language is not English, or who originate from countries whose national language is not English, are additionally required to demonstrate English language proficiency to the standard required by the University and published on its website (www.rgu.ac.uk/elr) and, where appropriate, in accordance with current UK legislation.
- 3.6 Exceptionally, there may be a requirement for more stringent English language competency in some courses and this shall be set out in the relevant Course Specification.

4. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE DEGREES

- 4.1 In addition to the requirements of [paragraph 1.1](#) of this Regulation, to be eligible for admission, an applicant shall normally possess either a relevant honours degree or any other qualification deemed by Academic Council to be acceptable for this purpose.

English Language Proficiency

- 4.2 The language of instruction at the University is English and proficiency in speaking, listening to, reading and writing English is essential. Students whose first language is not English, or who originate from countries whose national language is not English, are additionally required to demonstrate English language proficiency to the standard required by the University and published on its website (www.rgu.ac.uk/elr) and, where appropriate, in accordance with current UK legislation.
- 4.3 Exceptionally, there may be a requirement for more stringent English language competency in some courses and this shall be set out in the relevant Course Specification.

5. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

- 5.1 The University recognises two types of prior learning - certificated (RPCL) and experiential (RPEL) - which may facilitate the following:
- (i) entry to the first stage of a course for which the applicant does not possess the necessary entry qualifications;
 - (ii) exemption from specific modules/elements of a course, e.g. the work placement;
 - (iii) advanced entry to a course.

- 5.2 (i) The Course/Programme Management Team, operating with delegated authority from Academic Council, must decide whether the candidate has achieved the learning outcomes associated with elements of their chosen course as a result of their prior learning. It is the learning arising from the candidate's experience which should be accredited and not the experience itself. One exception to this rule is where candidates are seeking exemption from the work placement element of a course, in which case their prior work experience would be taken into consideration. Discussion at a meeting of a Course/Programme Management Team on any particular student case shall be reserved business.
- (ii) The simultaneous double counting of credit for the same module towards awards of the University shall not be permitted. Therefore, once credit has been counted towards one award of the University, it cannot be used towards another award of the University. In such circumstances where exemptions cannot be granted, alternative modules should be selected on the advice of the Course/Programme Management Team.
- 5.3 The requirements of the relevant professional body should be carefully considered by Course/Programme Management Teams. In particular, there may be restrictions on a candidate's entitlement to exemption from professionally-recognised courses.

Maximum Credit per RPL Claim that may be Approved by the Course/Programme Management Team

- 5.4 Credit per RPL Claim applies to both Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL). Any claim shall be subject to the approval of the Course/Programme Management Teams.

Intended Final Award's SCQF Credit Value	Maximum RPCL/RPEL Claim	SCQF Credits that must be achieved at the University
60	30	30
120	60	60
180	90	90
240	135, with only 15 credits permitted in the award-bearing stage	105
360	255, with only 15 credits permitted in the award-bearing stage	105
480	375, with only 15 credits permitted in the award-bearing stage	105

For both undergraduate and postgraduate awards exceptions to the minimum period of enrolment must be approved in advance by Academic Council or the Academic

Development Committee on its behalf. Following such approval details must be clearly stated in the Course Specification.

Provision for RPL for Professional Doctorates shall be specified within the Course Specification.

5.5 Obligations

- (i) Responsibility for operating the RPL scheme rests with the appropriate School.
- (ii) The candidate is responsible for making the claim to have their prior learning accredited.
- (iii) Where candidates qualify for entry with advanced standing, they may gain exemption from the whole or part of a stage of study. Where candidates are exempt from specific modules as a result of their prior learning, this should be indicated on each student's record and reported at the appropriate Assessment Board. Candidates' portfolios of evidence should be made available for consideration by the External Examiners.

5.6 Determination of Final Award

For candidates who gain entry with advanced standing as a result of a successful claim to have their prior learning accredited the final award will be based on the remaining non-exempt part (refer also to [paragraph 5.4](#) of this Regulation).

5.7 Charging Arrangements

All candidates shall be entitled to an initial interview to discuss their claim for RPL. This interview will be provided free of charge and shall enable candidates to decide if they wish to proceed with making a full claim. If they do wish to proceed, they should be informed of any fee(s) they will be charged, details of which can be obtained from the University's Financial Services Department.

6. RE-ADMISSION

6.1 A student who elects to leave the course prior to the final stage and to accept the award appropriate to the part of the course which has been successfully completed shall be entitled to seek re-admission to the course at a later date. The terms of any such re-admission shall be at the discretion of the University, and specifically shall take account of any changes in the content of the course which have been made since the applicant's previous attendance. Where the course and/or modules have changed since the student exited then it might not be appropriate to carry module grades forward. Instead, such modules shall be recorded as credit transfer, i.e. 'CT'. Any such decisions shall be at the discretion of the Course/Programme Management Team.

6.2 Where such an applicant is re-admitted and subsequently satisfies the requirements for a higher level of award in the course concerned, he/she shall be eligible to receive the higher award only on agreeing to relinquish the lower level award previously accepted.

7. **APPEALS PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS**

The University operates an appeals procedure for all applicants to the University, undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree. Further details can be found in [Schedule 2.1 of this Regulation](#).

SCHEDULE 2.1: APPEALS PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The University is committed to providing a high level of service to all applicants during the application and admission process.
- 1.2 Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an application should in the first instance seek feedback in accordance with the [Applicant Feedback Procedure](#). If the applicant remains dissatisfied following receipt of the feedback then the applicant may seek a reconsideration of the outcome of the application by submitting an [Admission Appeal Form](#).

2. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

Appeals against the outcome of an application shall only be considered on the following grounds:

- significant new information in support of the application is now available which was not available at the time of the original decision on the application; and/or
- the University has not adhered to its own policies and procedures.

3. APPEAL PROCEDURE

3.1 Stage One: Appeal

- 3.1.1 Any applicant seeking to appeal the outcome of an application should submit an [Admissions Appeal Form](#). The form, with any accompanying evidence, should be submitted to the *Head of Student Admissions Service*, normally no later than ten working days¹ following receipt of the feedback (paragraph 1.2 of this Schedule).
- 3.1.2 Receipt of the [Admission Appeal Form](#) will be acknowledged, by email. If no email address is available then a letter acknowledging receipt will be sent to the applicant by first class mail.
- 3.1.3 The *Head of Student Admissions Service* and a representative from the School relevant to the application will consider the [Admission Appeal Form](#) and will provide the applicant with a response to the appeal normally no later than five working days following receipt of the [Admission Appeal Form](#).

3.2 Stage Two: Continuation of Appeal

- 3.2.1 If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage One Appeal then he/she may choose to continue with the Appeal by submitting the [Admissions Appeal Form – Continuation of Appeal](#) to the *Dean of Student Recruitment and Admissions*.
- 3.2.2 Receipt of the [Admission Appeal Form](#) will be acknowledged, by email. If no email address is available then a letter acknowledging receipt will be sent to the applicant by first class mail.

¹ And henceforth, “working days” are Monday to Friday and excludes days that the University is closed.

3.2.3 A University Admission Appeal Panel will consider any *Admission Appeal Form – Continuation of Appeal*. The Panel will consist of:

Undergraduate and Postgraduate

- Head of School not associated with the applicant's School of study (Convener)
- Dean of Student Recruitment and Admissions
- Head of School (or nominee) relevant to the application

Research Degrees

- Head of School not associated with the applicant's School of study (Convener)
- Dean of Student Recruitment and Admissions
- Head of Graduate School

Exceptionally a Panel member may identify a nominee to attend the Panel on his/her behalf.

3.2.4 An applicant may only appeal once in relation to an application. If an applicant has applied for more than one course in the same admissions cycle and the appeal is applicable to all of the applications then only one *Admission Appeal Form* should be submitted.

3.2.6 If an applicant makes any alteration to the grounds of his/her appeal at any time after its initial lodgement then the appeal shall be deemed invalid.

3.2.7 The University will make the final decision on a formal appeal within 15 working days of receipt and the applicant will be informed in writing, either by email or by letter, as appropriate.

4. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN

4.1 All applicants of The Robert Gordon University are entitled to pursue a complaint through the Ombudsman where the complainant has exhausted the University's internal complaints procedure. The Ombudsman shall consider complaints where an applicant has suffered injustice or hardship as a result of: administrative failure; the failure of the University to provide a service; or failure in a service provided by the University. In exceptional circumstances the Ombudsman may consider: complaints which could be taken to court or to an independent tribunal, but not if proceedings have already begun; and complaints made more than 12 months after the day on which the complainant found out about the matter.

The Ombudsman shall not consider:

- properly made decisions that the University has a right to make, even if the complainant does not agree with the decision;
- personnel issues such as appointments of staff, pay, or discipline;
- most commercial or contractual issues.

Some of these matters are considered by other ombudsmen and agencies handling complaints and details can be found at the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman website at: www.spsso.org.uk.

4.2 Prior to contacting the Ombudsman, the complainant should have exhausted the University's internal complaints mechanisms. In the event that the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution to the complaint then the complainant can contact the Ombudsman. The complaint should be put in writing to the Ombudsman by using the

Complaints Form, which can be accessed at www.spsso.org.uk. All correspondence relating to the complaint should accompany the completed form.

In the event that the complainant experiences difficulties in putting the complaint in writing then he/she may contact the Ombudsman for advice.

In the event that a complaint is being made on someone else's behalf, that person is required to authorise the complaint in writing.

- 4.3 The Ombudsman shall endeavour to resolve complaints informally, without the need to proceed to a formal, and possibly lengthy, investigation. However, it is recognised that there shall be occasions when it is necessary to conduct a formal investigation and this may take several months to complete. In both instances, the Ombudsman shall notify the complainant of the course of action being taken and what is involved.

In the event that the Ombudsman requires additional background information, evidence or correspondence, to assist with the investigation then it shall contact the complainant. The Ombudsman shall also notify the University that a complaint is being considered. If the complainant has a strong objection to this then he/she should notify the Ombudsman.

At the end of the formal investigation, the complainant and the University shall be issued with a copy of the Ombudsman's report. In addition, the report shall be issued to the Scottish Parliament. The report shall not identify any person involved, except in certain limited circumstances.

If after investigation, the Ombudsman finds the complaint justified then it shall recommend a course of action to remedy the complaint. In doing this it shall have two main objectives:

- (i) To put the complainant in the position he/she would have been in if things had not gone wrong;
- (ii) To prevent the same thing happening to anyone else in the future.

In this way, the Ombudsman's role is more about finding remedies for the complainant, and not about punishing the body complained about.

In all cases, the Ombudsman aims to put the complainant, as far as possible, back in the position he/she would have been in if things had not gone wrong. In order to achieve this, the Ombudsman might require some or all of the following:

- an apology and/or an explanation;
- practical action to mitigate any injustice;
- reimbursement of any actual loss/costs necessarily incurred;
- other suitable redress, either under any redress scheme run by the authority itself or as a 'one-off' based on the specific circumstances of the case. In many cases, this redress could be non-financial;
- a modest payment in recognition of time and trouble;
- exceptionally, asking the authority to propose appropriate action (for example, in a particularly serious and/or non-standard case).

An important part of the Ombudsman's work is ensuring, as far as possible, that the matters that applicants complain about do not happen again. Therefore, as well as making recommendations about the specific case in question, the Ombudsman may also require the University to take more general action. This could include:

- changes to procedures;
- changes to policy;
- staff guidance/training;
- feedback about any changes made.

14.4 The Ombudsman carefully considers all complaints received and the time needed to reach a decision shall vary from case to case. However, the complainant shall be kept informed of what is occurring.

Within 3 working days of the complaint being received by the Ombudsman, an acknowledgement shall be issued to the complainant. Within a further 20 working days the Ombudsman shall either:

- Let the complainant know if it is not going to take action and explain why (If the Ombudsman believes that the complainant may be able to complain to another agency or ombudsman, the complainant shall be notified as such); or
- Tell the complainant how it intends to look further into the complaint; or
- Request additional information necessary to taking a decision.

Within a further 20 working days, if the Ombudsman has not reached a decision then it shall provide the complainant with an explanation as to why and detail any further action that is being taken. Thereafter, the complainant shall be kept updated on progress at intervals of no more than twenty working days.

Further details of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman can be obtained at:
www.spsso.org.uk.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman [online] from: www.spsso.org.uk
Regulation revised September 2005 following the implementation of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005.

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM: ACADEMIC APPEALS (AWARDS AND PROGRESSION)

This diagram is for guidance only. Please refer to the Regulation for details.

Applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of an application and seeks feedback in accordance with the *Applicant Feedback Procedure*.

Stage One

Applicant remains dissatisfied following receipt of feedback and seeks a reconsideration of the outcome by submitting an *Admission Appeal Form* normally no later than 10 working days following receipt of feedback.

Head of Student Admissions Service and a representative from the School considers the *Admission Appeal Form* and a response provided to the applicant normally no later than five working days following receipt of the *Admission Appeal Form*.

Stage Two

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage One Appeal then he/she may choose to continue with the Appeal by submitting the *Admissions Appeal Form – Continuation of Appeal* to the *Dean of Student Recruitment and Admissions*.

A University Admission Appeal Panel will consider any *Admission Appeal Form – Continuation of Appeal*.

The decision of the Panel will be communicated to the applicant within 15 working days of receipt of the *Admission Appeal Form – Continuation of Appeal*

