



# ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN

## Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy

Approved by	Academic Council		
Date approved		Status	Approved
Policy owners	Dean of Student Recruitment and Admissions and Head of Student Admissions Service	Impact assessed	
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## AIMS

RGU aims to:

- attract and retain students from a wide pool and from diverse communities, who have the potential to succeed and benefit from the experience;
- ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all applicants to gain admission to a course suited to their aspirations, and based on their ability to meet the demands and professional requirements of the course regardless of age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex or sexual orientation;
- ensure that the recruitment and application process is fair and transparent and that no applicant is discriminated, harassed or victimised on the grounds of their age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex or sexual orientation.

The University will achieve these aims by:

- ensuring that clear, consistent and accessible information and guidance about the University and its courses is available to all stakeholders involved in the recruitment and admissions process, e.g. prospective students, schools, colleges, and all University staff and their representatives;
- assessing all applications on an individual basis;
- ensuring that all assessment methods used for the selection of students are reliable, appropriate and fair; take into account prior learning and experience; reference qualification guidelines and formal University-level agreements when determining the appropriate stage of entry; acknowledge the requirement to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- ensuring that the principles surrounding the procedures for recruitment and admission to the University are as transparent and accessible as possible;
- ensuring that all staff involved in making decisions about an applicant's entry to the University do so in a manner that is transparent and consistent with policies and procedures.

This *Policy*, and the associated procedures noted below, have been prepared in compliance with relevant legislation, in particular, the Equality Act 2010. This *Policy* and associated procedures are also designed to ensure that the University is compliant with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) [UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education](#).

## **RECRUITMENT**

The definition of recruitment for the purposes of this *Policy* is as defined by the QAA and constitutes any activity in which the University provides information and guidance to an individual who is actively seeking admission to higher education.

Staff responsible for recruitment activity will be sufficiently knowledgeable, experienced and appropriately trained to provide true and accurate information on the University, its courses and relevant entry requirements when undertaking recruitment activity with prospective students.

Staff and accredited agents will have clear and written guidelines of what is expected of them when undertaking recruitment activity with prospective students.

Any procedures associated with recruitment will seek to be clear, transparent and accessible to all stakeholders involved in recruitment activity.

## **ADMISSIONS**

### **Admissions Procedures**

To ensure consistency of process, written admissions procedures exist that cover:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate admissions.
- Research degree admissions.

These procedures are maintained and updated as required by:

- Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions – Head of Student Admissions Service.
- Research Degree Admissions – Head of the Graduate School.

All admissions procedures are made available in electronic and hard copy format to all staff engaged in admissions processes, whether academic or support staff.

### **Entry Requirements**

Admission to the University is based on an applicant's individual merits and abilities. The principal academic criterion for determining an applicant's suitability for admission 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.

The University will look for the relevant and appropriate level of academic achievement as well as personal and professional experiences that provide an indication of ability to meet the demands and professional requirements of the course. Additional means of assessment, such as an interview or portfolio review may be required to determine suitability for the course applied for.

In addition applicants, where appropriate, need to fully comply with current legislation on immigration for the purposes of academic study.

The minimum entry criteria for undergraduate and taught postgraduate degrees are set out in *Academic Regulation A2: Admission*. Some courses may require entrants to have reached a standard above the minimum level and in that case the minimum entry criteria for the course are set by the School delivering the course.

Undergraduate academic criteria are specified in terms of the Scottish, English, Republic of Ireland and International Baccalaureate qualification frameworks, with equivalences provided for international applicants.

Postgraduate academic criteria are specified in terms of a UK Honours Degree, with equivalences provided for international applicants.

Research degree admission criteria are as contained in *Academic Regulation A6: Research Degrees*.

Proof of English language proficiency will be required from applicants as per *Academic Regulation A2: Admission*.

All minimum entry criteria are reviewed by the responsible School annually. Amendments will be authorised by the appropriate Head of School and are published in relevant formats.

The Schools reserve the right to change entry requirements for any given course during an admissions cycle, whilst ensuring offers are fair and implemented consistently.

The University reserves the right to make differential offers to applicants within the following categories:

- those who do not meet the exact criteria yet on a holistic assessment are considered to have the experience and ability to flourish academically.
- those who are considered eligible for consideration under our widening participation initiative *Access RGU* <http://www.rgu.ac.uk/future-students/access-rgu>

The academic entry criteria for all courses entering clearing are deemed to be the same as those used at all other times unless a variance is specifically authorised by the appropriate Head of School.

Whilst the Heads of School have ownership over the setting of entry requirements, and expected to decide upon such in collaboration with other interested University staff, in the event of any dispute, the Convener of Academic Council as Chief Academic Officer will arbitrate.

### **Transparency and Consistency**

The University strives to ensure that clear, accessible information is made available with regard to academic and non-academic requirements for entry to its courses. Where additional methods of assessment (e.g. interview or portfolio submission) are used to

select candidates, this will be explicitly stated in our published criteria for the benefit of applicants.

To ensure consistency of process and decision, the majority of all admissions decisions are made by trained staff in the University's Student Admissions Service.

Where decisions are made by academic Admissions Tutors within Schools, these are checked and verified by staff in the Student Admissions Service. With regard to research degree admission decisions, these are authorised by individual academics within each School which are then checked and verified by the Research Degrees Office.

### **Applicants with Criminal Conviction**

In the majority of cases, a prior criminal conviction will not preclude a candidate from being offered a place at the University. However, the University will be required to assess such applications on a case by case basis in order to ensure that neither the applicant, the staff nor students of the University will be put at risk should the applicant become a student of the University.

### **Protection of Vulnerable Groups**

All applicants to courses where their studies will require interaction with children and/or vulnerable adults will be required to join the *Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG)*. This will be completed either prior to enrolment or within 6 weeks of starting the course and the outcome has to be known and assessed prior to any placement.

### **Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants**

The University is committed to providing feedback, when requested, to any applicant whose application has been unsuccessful or where they feel that the conditions placed in their offer are unexpected. Feedback will be given to enable applicants to reflect on their progress through the application process and does not constitute a reconsideration of an application or a challenge to the University's decision on an application. For further information please refer to the [Procedure for Applicants Requesting Feedback](#).

## **APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS**

The University aims to consider all applications fairly, effectively and in line with current policies and procedures. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome or treatment of their application, they should follow the appeal or complaint procedure as appropriate.

**Appeals:** If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their application and any subsequent feedback received, they are required to submit a formal appeal. For full information under which circumstances an appeal can be considered please refer to the [Appeals Procedure for Applicants](#).

**Complaints:** If an applicant is dissatisfied with the handling of their application, they should in the first instance, contact the Admissions Office or Research Degrees Office as

appropriate. A formal complaint may be submitted by following the [Complaints Handling Procedure](#).

## **NEW COURSES**

The University will recruit to courses that have been approved to proceed to validation by Academic Development Committee. Offers of admission made to prospective students prior to validation will state that this offer is subject to the course being validated.

## **COURSE CHANGES**

Changes to any of the University's courses which impacts on course or module delivery or availability as previously communicated should normally be made at least 12 weeks prior to the start of the course. Such changes will be communicated to applicants affected at the earliest possible opportunity.

## **Course Closures**

A course may be closed due to low numbers approaching intake meaning the learning experience and outcomes to the group of students will be detrimentally affected. Such closures should normally be communicated to affected applicants at least 8 weeks prior to the start date.

## **Course Suspension**

A course will be considered suspended when it is no longer going to be running in the next or any future intakes. The decision to suspend a course should be made at least 16 weeks prior to the start date of the course. Any course being suspended within 16 weeks of the course start date should continue to recruit and be suspended for the following intake.

The decision to suspend a course will be communicated to applicants affected at the earliest possible opportunity. Affected applicants will also be given clear guidance on their alternative and future options.

Courses will not recruit during a period of suspension.

## **Course Cessation**

A course will be considered ceased when this has formal approval by the Academic Development Committee. Any course ceased within 16 weeks of the course starting should continue to recruit and be ceased in the following intake.

The decision to cease a course will be communicated to applicants affected at the earliest possible opportunity. Affected applicants will also be given clear guidance on their future options.

A course will continue to recruit until it has been formally ceased unless it was already suspended.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Dean of Student Recruitment** is responsible for ensuring:

- the *Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy* is reviewed biennially, and any changes are considered by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and approved by Academic Council.
- staff working within Student Recruitment and Admissions Directorate are aware of and support the *Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy* and associated procedures;
- the Student Admissions service communicates with applicants affected by changes to or suspension and cessation of courses;
- Admissions staff are competent to make fair and sound judgements; are trained to an appropriate standard in admissions work;
- all staff involved in admissions and recruitment activity are aware of the University's *Equality and Diversity Policy* and how to obtain further advice on issues related to equality and diversity when dealing with prospective students.
- Directorate staff and accredited agents responsible for recruitment are competent and trained to an appropriate standard;
- procedures related to the *Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy* are clear and updated annually.

**The Head of Graduate School** is responsible for ensuring:

- admissions processes for research degree applicants are clear and reviewed annually;
- Graduate School admissions staff, in conjunction with Schools, are aware of and support the University's *Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy* and associated procedures;
- Graduate School admissions staff, in conjunction with Schools, are competent to make fair and sound judgements; are trained to an appropriate standard in admissions work;
- Graduate School admissions staff, in conjunction with Schools, are aware of the University's *Equality and Diversity Policy* and how to obtain further advice on issues related to equality and diversity when dealing with enquiries and applications.

**Heads of School** are responsible for ensuring:

- appropriate admissions criteria are developed for each course in conjunction with the course leader and Dean of Student Recruitment, communicated to the Student Admissions Service and the Department for Governance and Academic Quality, and updated annually.

- Admissions Tutors and other staff engaged in recruitment activity and/or admissions work are aware of and support the University's *Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy* and associated procedures; are competent to make fair and sound judgements;
- Admissions Tutors and other staff responsible for recruitment and admissions are knowledgeable, competent and trained to an appropriate standard;
- the Head of Student Recruitment and Head of Student Admissions Service are informed at the earliest opportunity of any courses that are suspended, closed or ceased during the recruitment cycle;
- the Head of Student Recruitment and Head of Student Admissions Service are informed at the earliest opportunity of any change to course content which impacts on choice or availability of modules once enrolled on the course;
- advice and guidance is provided to prospective students affected by changes to course content or suspension/cessation of a course during the recruitment cycle;
- Admissions Tutors and other staff responsible for recruitment and admissions are aware of the University's *Equality and Diversity Policy* and how to obtain further advice on issues related to equality and diversity when dealing with enquiries and applications.

**The applicant** is responsible for ensuring that:

- all personal and academic details are true and correct at the time of application;
- the University is immediately notified of any changes to their circumstances during the admissions process.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The University's *Recruitment and Admissions to Higher Education Policy* will be reviewed biennially (unless a change in the law or QAA guidance requires an earlier review) by the Quality Enhancement and Assurance Committee (in liaison with the Head of Student Admissions Service, Head of Student Recruitment, and the Head of the Graduate School) in order to ensure it continues to meet national and institutional requirements.

The above policies and procedures may be subject to change – please note that it is your responsibility to check them regularly.