

ADMISSIONS POLICY

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Policy control

Approved by	Academic Board	
Contact/s		
History/Revision dates	Revised 2 March 2015	
Audience	Internal (Intranet only)	X
	External (Internet)	X

1. Purpose

Introduction

This document sets out the University of Bedfordshire's Admissions Policy. It is intended to provide an accessible summary for applicants to all courses, regardless of level, mode of delivery or award and their advisors.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University of Bedfordshire Academic Regulations, see the university website.

The policy is based on expectations and good practice within the Higher Education Sector, the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Code for Higher Education, (Chapter B2) Recruitment and Admissions and the good practice guides published by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA).

Aims

The University of Bedfordshire's mission is to create a vibrant multicultural learning community enabling people to transform their lives by participating in excellent, innovative education, scholarship and research.

The University of Bedfordshire is committed to the maintenance of academic standards and ensuring that:

- All applicants are treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner;
- All applicants with the demonstrable ability to benefit from one of our courses are enabled to do so, where a suitable vacancy exists and where entry criteria are met;
- All routes into higher education which are of a comparable standard are accorded parity of esteem;
- The social background of the student body reflects the institutional commitment to widening participation, fair access and internationalisation.

The University is committed to providing an admissions process that ensures fairness, transparency and equal opportunity and welcomes applications from candidates regardless of their background or individual circumstances.

2. Scope

Admissions Principles

- The University of Bedfordshire is committed to maintaining the highest academic standards;
- The University aims to ensure that its admissions and recruitment processes are fair, open and transparent;

- The University strives to promote its courses as widely as possible amongst all groups of individuals that may benefit from its provision;
- The University aims to admit students who have the ability to successfully complete and to benefit from the course of study;
- The University ensures that the operation of admissions processes and application of entry criteria are undertaken in compliance with the Equality Act;
- The University values diversity and is committed to equality in education. Students are selected on the basis of their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes. The University seeks to overcome barriers to participation and to support each individual to develop to their full potential;
- The University recognises that applicants have differing backgrounds and experience and that not all have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their potential. The University aims to set academic achievement in context through consideration of a range of factors which may include but is not limited to: higher education progression from previous study, significant time in care, participation of parents or guardians in higher education, disruption of formal education through health or family reasons.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for the University's admissions policy rests with Academic Board. The accountable senior manager for discharging and enacting the policy is the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) External Relations.

The University is responsible for all admissions to its courses including those run by collaborative partners. The DVC External Relations or their nominated representative, for example the Director of Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Communication (MARC) or the Director of International Office, is responsible for the implementation of the policy. Those working within the UK & EU Admissions Team, the International Admissions team and the Research Graduate School have delegated responsibility for:

- Ensuring that decisions delegated by the DVC External Relations and the University Registrar are based on the standard entry requirements outlined in University Academic Regulation 3.2 and for research degrees Academic Regulations 4.1.3, 4.2.1, 4.4.2, 4.5.1, 4.5.2, 4.6.1-4.6.5;
- Processing applications in a timely manner to ensure that agreed response times to applicants are achieved;
- Advising academic staff on the suitability of applicants outside delegated standard decision-making;
- Making arrangements for assessing the suitability of applicants including liaising with Faculties to arrange interviews and the assessment of portfolios or for credit transfer applications where necessary;
- Communicating decisions and providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants or their agents or partner institutions;
- Advising on the correct level of tuition fee an applicant should be charged (home or international or equivalent level qualification (ELQ));
- Liaising with applicants with regard to the withdrawal of a course or changes to a course for which an applicant has an offer;
- Maintaining accurate data on applicants on the Student Records System
- Ensuring offers to international applicants are compliant with the requirements of the Home Office;
- Issuing Confirmation of Acceptance to Study documents to international students.

Executive Deans for the University Faculties are responsible for:

- Liaising and working with the DVC External Relations, the Director of MARC and associated MARC staff, the Director of International Office and associated International Office staff to ensure that this policy is implemented consistently across the University.
- Implementation of this policy at Faculty level where academic decisions on entry are made by the Faculty.

- Reviewing and developing entry criteria and providing clear guidance on their application. Ensuring applications referred to admissions tutors or course leaders are reviewed in an appropriate timeframe to allow a reasonable response time to applicants.
- Seeking appropriate approval as soon as possible, and within the University agreed timeframes, for significant changes to courses and course closures.

The operational delivery of admissions at the University is undertaken by three departments – for taught programmes, the Home/EU Admissions Team in the Marketing, Admissions, Recruitment and Communications department and International Admissions in the International Office, and for research degrees, the Research Graduate School. Within each team there is a Head of Admissions (Head of UK/EU Admissions, Head of International Admissions, Director of Research Development) who is responsible for the day to day operation of the policy.

The Heads of Admissions are supported by Senior Admissions Officers, Admissions Officers and Admissions Assistants. The Head of Admissions, Senior Admissions Officers and Admissions Officers have been delegated to make admissions decisions on applications and to confirm offers of places and confirm the level of tuition fee payable.

3. Policy

Enquiries and Information, Advice and Guidance

The University is committed to providing an excellent applicant experience and recognises the importance of accurate and informative information, advice and guidance to enquiries and their advisors. The University offers the opportunity to all groups of prospective students to have contact with current students, academic staff and support staff.

The University is committed to offering appropriate information, advice and guidance to enquiries and advisors about the value of higher education. The information, advice and guidance provided will seek to enable prospective applicants to make informed choices and encourage applications appropriate to the interest, academic qualifications and potential of the potential applicant.

The University aims to provide accurate and accessible information (including entry requirements, tuition fees, course content), through print and digital media to ensure that prospective students are aware of the opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate study which will help them to make an informed choice regarding the course which most suits their qualifications, skills, interests and capacities. Information will be provided in online and print material about any courses which require an interview, audition, portfolio or digital assessment or written assessment as part of the selection criteria. Collaborative partners of the University also provide this information as standard.

The University will provide information on application routes, deadlines and entry requirements to enquirers through printed materials and electronic means. The university aims to provide materials in alternative formats on request.

The University collects information on those who have made enquiries relating to courses and future entry to the University and will use this information for marketing purposes unless an enquirer has indicated the wish to opt out of receiving marketing information.

Admissions Criteria

The University will take into account all elements of the submitted application when making an assessment decision. The application will be expected to include; details of achieved and pending qualification, the stated interest of the applicant and their commitment and motivation to study, where relevant work experience or other non-academic experience, the academic and or professional reference, where required an applicant's research proposal and where relevant an applicant's English language proficiency. Where the course applied for involves a formal selection event, the performance at interview, audition or portfolio assessment will form part of the criteria for admittance.

The admissions criteria for each course is available on the website, in printed material and for undergraduate provision on UCAS entry profiles.

- Academic entry requirements and the method of selection used for each course will be made available to applicants through printed and on line materials, which may include entry profiles on external websites such as UCAS,
- Information will be provided on any other requirements, either academic or non-academic, which an applicant must achieve prior to the start of the course. This may include English Language requirements, successful completion of Qualified Teacher Status skills tests, DBS clearance and occupational health clearance.
- Where a course leads to an award of a professional qualification in addition to an academic award the University will outline the requirements of the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body alongside any other entry requirements.
- Where the selection process or entry requirements are revised after the original publication, the revised information will be updated in on line materials and in any subsequent print copy, where an applicant is already holding an offer, the original requirements will remain in place.
- The University, through the relevant Admissions Office, will seek to redress any inaccurate information which may have been provided and provide guidance and support to enable a suitably qualified applicant to be successful in gaining admission.
- Admissions staff will normally be guided by the published UCAS tariff for undergraduate programmes and/or National Qualification Framework (NQF). International entry qualifications are also informed by NARIC, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and agreed by Academic Board. Details of specific requirements in relation to particular courses will be posted on the University website.
- Faculties may set specific course requirements that may include additional or separate criteria, or may restrict the number or type of qualifications that can be counted towards entry to that course. For example the requirement for a Science qualification at Level 3 forms part of the selection for BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science. The specific requirements will be set out clearly in promotional and other course documentation and are approved through the University's course approval process and Academic Board.
- English Language entry requirements are agreed by the Academic Board.
- The University accepts all equivalent qualifications, unless there are external regulatory conditions which take precedence, providing they are at the appropriate level of study according to the National Qualification Framework.
- The University accepts applicants who are resitting both modules within a qualification or the qualification in its entirety. Only the highest achieved grade will count towards the meeting of an entry requirement.
- International applicants will be required to demonstrate their level of English via a Secure English Language Test or approved equivalent. For a current list, see the University website.
- Applicants who do not meet the English language requirements may be offered a place on condition that they successfully complete a pre-sessional English or International Foundation course before commencement of the relevant course. To enter one of these courses, applicants must hold a Secure English Language Test qualification at the required level. Students must successfully complete and pass the pre-sessional English course prior to progression to their intended course of study. For further information, see the University website.
- The University will review the entry criteria for each course prior to the start of the admissions cycle and reserves the right to change the entry criteria subject to the approval of Academic Board.

Application Processing

The University's application process is designed to maintain transparency and consistency and to provide equal consideration for all applicants who apply by the relevant closing date (if applicable) or, an equal consideration deadline or apply in good time to complete all admissions processes before the start of the course, including any visa requirements.

- The University strives to ensure that applicants are informed of progress at all points during the application and offer process by providing clear and accurate information to support applicants.
- The University will acknowledge the receipt of the application within two working days of the application being received.
- The University publishes information on its website to give further information and guidance to applicants about the stages of the admissions process, and signposts applicants to these pages in each communication.

Application Routes

- Applications for full time undergraduate courses, including foundation degrees are normally made through UCAS. Applications leading to the award of a Professional or Postgraduate Certificate in Education should be made via UCAS Teacher Training. Direct Applicants are those who do not apply via UCAS or UCAS Teacher Training.
- Applications can be made directly to full time undergraduate courses during the annual UCAS clearing period, which normally runs from July to September in each application cycle.
- The University will accept direct applications or applications from an agent for all Levels of study recognised formally by the University for international fee paying students.
- If a student applies via a recognised agent, it will be assumed the applicant's consent has been given to send communications to the nominated agent.
- Applications for part-time study should be made directly to the University using the appropriate application form.
- Applicants progressing from international linked institutions should apply through their institution.
- Applicants who are applying to progress from a University of Bedfordshire Foundation degree to the level 6 top-up or University of Bedfordshire undergraduates who are applying to progress to a postgraduate course (excluding PGCE or MSc Social Work) should use the relevant progression form available at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/course>
- Applications for courses at a recognised partner institution may be made directly to the partner institution.

Selection Process

The University provides information on the process of selection and how the applications are assessed on its website. The selection process will include an assessment on the merit of the application and the potential to succeed through the qualification results and predicted attainment, the personal statement, references and where appropriate performance in an interview, test, audition or portfolio assessment. Admissions staff are provided with regular training on admissions issues and are expected to follow University admissions policy, processes and guidance.

- Admissions Officers process undergraduate and postgraduate applications for taught programmes and make an assessment of the applicant's fit with the course entry requirements.
- The Research Graduate School and academic staff in Faculties jointly process applications for research degree programmes, including professional doctorates, and make an assessment of the applicant's fit with the course entry requirements.
- For courses leading to a University of Bedfordshire award delivered at a collaborative partner institution, the named admissions officer at the collaborative partner institution makes this initial assessment based on the University's criteria, admissions policy and operational procedures.
- Where an applicant does not meet the published entry requirements for a taught course, Admissions Officers will seek advice from the relevant academic department regarding offer making.
- The University may request further information to help aid the decision making process and will expect applicants to respond to requests for additional information within the timeframe given. Applicants who do not respond with all the requested information within timeframe, normally a minimum of two weeks, may be rejected.

- Applicants who apply during clearing will be given a shorter period of time to provide supporting information, the timeframes for response will be given in all communication to applicants.

Interviews, auditions and portfolio assessments

Where entry to a course requires a formal selection event, including an interview, audition or portfolio assessment, details of this requirement will be included in published material on the course. A formal selection event may include a written assessment, group interview or activity, individual interview and a review of a portfolio. Applicants invited to attend a formal selection event will be provided with details of how the event will be conducted and any preparation required, for example pieces required in a portfolio or preparation for a performance. The University's preferred method of conducting selection events is in person, face to face. It may be possible for alternative methods of assessment to be accommodated at the applicant's request, but where the selection event includes a written assessment or group interview or practical this cannot be guaranteed. The University seeks to ensure that all those involved in the selection of applicants via a formal interview, audition or portfolio assessment are appropriately trained to make assessment decisions.

- Applicants who are invited to attend a formal selection event (in person or online) will be given adequate notice to attend, normally a minimum of a week. Details of the selection process and any preparation that is required will also be provided.
- Applicants applying through clearing may be given shorter notice to attend a selection event, but will still be notified of the selection process and any preparation required.
- Applicants are expected to notify the University at the point of application of any dates they are unavailable to attend a selection event. If an applicant is not able to attend a selection event an alternative date may be requested but cannot always be guaranteed to be accommodated.
- The Admissions Teams will ensure that steps have been taken to identify and meet access arrangements which individuals may require (e.g. level access to interview venue).

Applicants Requiring a Student Visa to Study in the UK

- The University complies fully with the UK Home Office Visas and Immigration Tier 4 sponsor requirements for the sponsors of international students.
- The University is responsible for checking that all international applicants applying to the University are eligible to study on their chosen course according to the conditions of their immigration status and/or visa.
- Applicants classed as 'overseas' for fee purposes are required to provide immigration history and proof of their current visa status before an unconditional offer can be made.
- International applicants wishing to apply for a Tier 4 visa will be issued with a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) by the University of Bedfordshire once they have completed the admissions process and we are satisfied they meet all the requirements set by UK Home Office Visas and Immigration governing the issuance of CASs (see <http://www.beds.ac.uk/international/visas-your-questions-answered#2>) Only applicants who have met all the conditions of their offer, including making an advance payment and showing satisfactory proof of their immigration history as outlined above, can be issued with a CAS.
- The University is required to report to UK Home Office Visas and Immigration when a Tier 4 student fails to enrol on their course within the enrolment period. The University is also required to maintain up-to-date contact details for Tier 4 students and hold copies of all relevant passport and visa documents. Immigration documents will be collected as part of the enrolment process at the start of the course. Documents must be presented in their original format within the enrolment period. Students who fail to provide the required documents within the timescales specified will be withdrawn from the University's register and reported to the UK Home Office.
- In the case of international students who are found not to meet the minimum requirements as laid down by the Home Office subsequent to being issued a CAS, the CAS will be withdrawn and students will not be able to register. If a student has already registered, their registration may be terminated and the student withdrawn.

ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme)

Applicants will need to apply for an [ATAS](#) clearance certificate before applying for a student visa if they plan to undertake postgraduate research in some science, engineering or technology disciplines. Applicants will also need an ATAS certificate if they are undertaking a postgraduate taught master's programme in Materials Science, Materials Technology, Aerospace Engineering, Mechanical Engineering or Physics. Some MEng courses also require ATAS clearance.

Applicants do not need an ATAS certificate if they are a UK or EEA national.

Applicants with declared disabilities

- The University of Bedfordshire is committed to developing an inclusive learning environment for all students and seeks to reduce any barriers which might prevent a student with a disability seeking to study at Bedfordshire. Consideration for applications from applicants who declare a disability is based on the same principles as for other candidates. A decision may, however, need to take into account specific competency requirements relating to professional body requirements.
- The admissions procedure for disabled applicants aims to ensure that applications indicating support or access requirements are given the consideration they require in an effective and timely way, taking into account the applicant's views and using the specialist expertise available within Student Support Services;
- Disabled applicants are encouraged to declare their support needs at application stage. All applications are assessed for academic suitability against the agreed entry criteria for their chosen course. The Health and Wellbeing Team within the University's Student Support Services may contact the applicant where necessary for further discussions about the support needs and requirements.
- Faculties review the application to determine what reasonable adjustments may be academically possible. Where it is not possible for a reasonable adjustment to be made this decision will be communicated to the applicant and, if appropriate, an alternative course may be offered or the application may be rejected.
- Disability information provided by disabled applicants will be used as part of the process of determining any particular access and support arrangements that may be required and disabled applicants are given the opportunity to discuss their requirements prior to entry; there is no unnecessary delay in the processing of offers; any information disclosed is handled securely and confidentially whether at the application stage or any other stage of the student life cycle. If an offer cannot be made for reasons related to their disability, the University will inform the applicant of the decision and reasons in writing and make every attempt to advise the applicant about their options.
- Where a reasonable adjustment can be made to accommodate the applicant the Health and Wellbeing Team within the University's Student Support Services will contact the applicant where necessary for further discussions about their support needs/requirements. This is to ensure that any necessary reasonable adjustments are put in place for the start of their studies and to ensure a smooth transition into life as a student at the University. This will include arrangements for enrolment, registration and induction.
- Where application is made to study at a collaborative partner institution it is the responsibility of the collaborative partner to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the applicant. The University provides support and guidance to partners in the management of this process.

Care Leavers

- The University is committed to ensuring a successful transition into the University community from UK applicants who are in the care of the local authority and applicants are encouraged to declare this information at the point of application.
- The Access Partnership Lead Officers will take responsibility for supporting applicants within local authority care and will make contact with applicants to offer any relevant support and guidance, which may include but is not limited to help with interview attendance, student loan applications, accommodation applications and registration.

Offer Making

- For those applicants where a full and complete application form is submitted for a course with a standard admissions process, the majority of applicants will receive an outcome within 10 working days. For courses requiring an interview, portfolio or other non-standard selection process and where a full and complete application form is submitted half of applicants are informed and or invited of the selection process within 10 working days of the receipt of application. Admissions will seek to keep decisions to within these time frames but at peak periods during the application cycle it may take longer for decisions to be reached. Applicants are advised to contact the relevant Admissions office in the first instance 10 days after the application has been submitted for an update.
- For certain courses, where there is a high volume of applicants and a limited number of places available, a full or partial 'gathered field' may be operated whereby some or all suitably qualified applicants may be held until after the selection process has been completed for all on-time applications before a decision is communicated. The University will seek to keep such delays to a minimum.
- For applications received via UCAS and UCAS Teacher Training the formal decision will be communicated to the applicant via UCAS and UCAS Teacher Training. Applicants applying directly to the University will have their offer communicated directly to them.
- The University is committed to ensuring that offers made are clear, easy to understand and consistent with the published entry requirement. Any offer given will confirm if there are any conditions, both academic and non-academic, that an applicant needs to meet.
- If an offer of a place is made to an applicant, an offer letter will be sent confirming any conditions of offer, where appropriate, and the deadline for conditions to be met. The offer letter will provide additional information on the University, including financial support available, and details of how additional support can be sourced. Information will also be provided on the process for accepting the offer, and making any tuition fee deposit required.
- Should an application be unsuccessful the applicant will be notified of the reasons at the point the decision is confirmed. Detail of the feedback process is also provided.
- Applicants who are applying through UCAS and UCAS Teacher Training will need to indicate their acceptance of the offer by the deadline given. The University reserves the right to refuse requests for offers to be accepted after the UCAS and UCAS Teacher Training deadline if there are no further places available.
- Applicants who apply directly to the University should indicate their acceptance of the offer within the time frame given. The University reserves the right to decline the offer should a response not be received and the places on the course have subsequently been filled.
- By accepting an offer at the University an applicant also accepts the terms and conditions of the university including acceptance of the tuition fee policy which is available on the website.
- Where an applicant has accepted a conditional offer based on achieving a required level of academic achievement the date by when the condition should be met will be clearly communicated to the applicant.
- For applications via UCAS 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. In all other cases decisions are made based on results sent in by the applicant or by their school/college. Applicants are responsible for providing results to the university by 31st August in the year in which they have applied and all results must be provided from an official source.
- Applicants are responsible for providing evidence of their academic achievement by providing copies of qualifications; checks will be undertaken by Admissions Officers or the Research Graduate School to confirm the validity of the evidence provided with relevant regulatory authorities. Admissions will undertake its own checks to ensure that results are genuine, including but not limited to using the online verification services provided by examining bodies such as IELTS, TOEFL and Pearson and, if necessary, by contacting the awarding institution.
- The University reserves the right to request notarised translated transcripts for qualifications not in English to establish if the entry requirements have been satisfied.
- Applicants who fail to meet the entry or the conditions of the offer may still be admitted to their chosen course at the discretion of the University if the University considers that the applicant has the capacity to succeed and where places allow. In such cases, applicants may be offered an alternative course of study or be offered the opportunity to start at the next entry

point providing the conditions of the offer are then met. This offer will be at the discretion of the University. Applicants who firmly accept the offer of a place and meet any conditions of the offer, where applicable, will be sent an acceptance letter which will provide final details of the course and details of when applicants should arrive to register with the University and begin their course of study.

- International applicants who have met all the conditions of their offer and wish to apply for a Tier 4 visa will be issued with a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) by the University of Bedfordshire once they have completed the admissions process and we are satisfied they meet all the requirements set by UK Home Office Visas and Immigration governing the issuance of CASs (see <http://www.beds.ac.uk/international/visas-your-questions-answered#2>).
- The University of Bedfordshire offers a range of Scholarships and Bursaries to students to support their studies. Details of the Scholarships and Bursaries are made available on the University website and in the OFFA agreement <http://www.beds.ac.uk/aboutus/qu/offa>.
- During clearing only unconditional offers can be made to applicants, applicants receiving an offering during this time will be given the deadline by which the offer should be accepted. Any offer made during clearing will be subject to satisfactory confirmation of grades achieved.
- During the application process the University will:
 - Confirm to applicants any scholarships or bursary that they may be eligible for and the process for the award of the scholarship; use information applicants have provided to assess eligibility for an award, or request supporting information from applicants to enable assessment to be made. All students are required to provide the original qualifications used to gain entry to the course at the point of registration. Registration may be refused if this requirement is not met. Only when original qualifications are received will the University be satisfied that the information provided at the point of application is correct and that the qualifications are genuine. Applicants who are suspected or found to be providing fraudulent qualifications will be subject to the procedure outlined in the Academic Discipline Policy and Procedures available at http://www.beds.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/237100/Academic-Offences-Procedure-Sept-2012.pdf.
- The University recognises that at times the applicant may not be able to provide evidence of the qualifications due to circumstances outside of their control. In this instance the applicant should confirm the reasons for delay to the Admissions Office, where in consultation with the relevant Faculty a decision will be taken to either hold the place or make a decision on the information currently available.

Applications for Advanced Standing (where Recognition of Prior Learning may be considered)

- The University considers applicants who wish to gain Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for either: credit transfer, recognition of prior certificated learning and recognition of prior experiential learning. The University has an agreed policy of Recognition of Prior Learning. The process described in the RPL Policy, available on the university website, will take precedent over the admissions policy during the selection process.
- The University considers applications for credit transfer where the applicant has been awarded credits of qualifications by a UK higher education degree-awarding or equivalent body in accordance with the FHEQ. The University determines the credit status in terms of outcomes, volume and level of an applicant's award relative to that of the intended university award.
- Applicants who wish to apply for credit transfer should make an application via the appropriate application route as outlined in the Application Routes section ensuring that the point of entry they wish to join is identified.
- The relevant Admissions Office will request supporting information on the credits the applicant has achieved or is working towards. This information will be shared with the relevant Course Leader and RPL Co-Ordinator in the accepting Faculty.
- The decision on whether to allow the credit transfer will be communicated to the applicant at the point of offer. Where the outcomes, volume and level of the applicants previous credits

are not considered appropriate, and where an applicant meets the entry requirements, the applicant will be offered a place for the level they are considered qualified for.

- The process for applying for recognition of prior certificate learning (RPCL) and recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) is outlined in the RPL Policy.
- The University does not normally consider applications for research degree admission on the basis of RPL, and the Director of Research Development should be consulted in the case of any application.
- Applications for study at partner institutions on the basis of RPL will be considered under the RPL policy, and the Account Manager will be responsible for submitting applications to the Faculty RPL coordinator.
- The process by which RPL applications become part of the standard admissions process and do not require separate scrutiny on each occasion is described in the RPL policy.

Admissions to Programmes Delivered through Collaborative Partners

The University enters into relationships with collaborative partners both in the UK and overseas who, are approved to deliver collaborative provision leading to an award of the University by the Academic Board. Relationships where the University authorises the delivery of its own approved courses by a collaborative partner are defined as franchised provision. In a relationship where the University has judged that a course developed and delivered by another institution is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to a University award and that it takes full account of the UK Quality Code and other appropriate external reference points, the provision is defined as validated.

The admissions process for collaborative provision will be confirmed during the institutional approval or review process. The University is always the final arbiter regarding whether an applicant can be admitted to a programme which leads to a University award. The appropriate admission information will be made available to potential students and applicants in both printed and online materials. Applications for courses at a recognised partner institution may be made directly to the partner institution

The partner is responsible for the verification of the accuracy and authenticity of the applicant's documentation and retains a copy of this material for scrutiny by the University.

Based on information provided by the applicant, the partner will undertake an initial screening of applications to determine whether the University's approved academic entry requirements for the course are met.

For taught programmes, the partner sends the application information to the Faculty Registry administrator responsible for maintaining the University's student record for the partnership. This will comprise:

- The application form
- Copies of certificates, including any relating to English-language proficiency – signed/stamped by the partner to confirm that the original versions have been seen and verified
- Confirmation of identity – also signed/stamped
- Reasons for proposed acceptance or rejection reached through the initial screening process

Where adherence to the entry requirements cannot be clearly evidenced by the Registry administrator, the application material will be sent to the Account Manager to facilitate consideration of the application by a suitably qualified member of academic staff at the University.

The Link Tutor will endorse (or otherwise) the conclusion of the screening process, ensuring that a clear decision is given by the University for each applicant. The Account Manager will inform the partner of the outcome, and will also inform internal colleagues to ensure that application information can be matched against registration information. This includes Link Coordinator and the Faculty Registry administrator.

The Faculty Registry administrator will ensure that the following information is stored as an auditable record of the admissions process:

- Copies of the application form, certificates and proof of identification
- The results of the initial screening undertaken by the partner
- Any confirmation from the University relating to applicants with non-standard entry requirements
- The endorsement (or otherwise) of the screening process by the Account Manager

For research degrees at partner institutions, the Research Graduate School will process admissions in collaboration with the Partner Programme Team.

Where a procedures manual is in operation, the operational process for admissions will be described therein. Where it is necessary for the admissions process for an individual partnership to deviate from this policy in between the point of institutional approval and review, the revisions will be agreed through application to TQSC. Variations from the Admissions policy will be made to Academic Board.

Where a collaborative partner is responsible for any aspects of the admissions process the partner ensures that the principles of admissions outlined within this policy are adhered to, that staff involved in the admittance of students to a University award are appropriately trained and that the entry conditions are met by applicants prior to registration with the University.

Applicant Checks

Fee Assessments

- It is the responsibility of the University to assess the fee status of potential students. In most cases, the fee status of applicants can be classified on the basis of information contained on their application form. However, where this is not possible a formal fee assessment process is carried out to determine their fee in line with the UK Governments Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations 1997 and the Education (Fees and Awards) (Amendment) Regulations 2007. Fee assessment decisions are made by Admissions Officers who undertake regular training.
- Appeals against fee status must be made within three months of the fee assessment having been carried out or at the point of enrolment whichever comes first and should be made to the Head of UK/EU Admissions. An appeal will not be processed retrospectively after enrolment on a course. Any changes to fee status after enrolment are at the discretion of the DVC External Relations and will only be applicable at the next billing point.
- The University reserves the right to amend a fee status if further information comes to light and changes will take immediate effect.

Fees Policy

- When accepting an offer of a place either directly, through an agent or via UCAS or UCAS Teacher Training the applicant is also agreeing to the University Tuition Fees Policy available at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/money/fees/policy>

Criminal Convictions

- Whilst operating an admission system committed to equality of opportunity, the University must consider the welfare of all students and staff and any possible risk to them when considering allowing applicants with known convictions to study on University premises. The decision to admit any such student is the responsibility of the Registrar or those to whom the Registrar delegates the decision making.
- Information regarding convictions is requested so that an application can be considered fully and will not be used for any other purposes. The information provided will be held confidentially, however, where an applicant applies for a course that may involve placements working with children/vulnerable adults, or the course is governed by an external accreditation body, the information applicants provide may be shared with the relevant placement provider prior to an offer being made.

DBS and Health Checks

- For some courses, particularly in the areas of health, teaching, social and youth work, applicants will be required to undertake an enhanced vetting and barring check, either during the admissions process or in some limited cases once enrolled on their chosen course. For such courses applicants will be requested to declare all convictions, including cautions, reprimands and final warnings, including those classified as 'spent' under the The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012

The University will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that applicants for such courses have completed the vetting and barring process before starting their course. Where it is unable to do so, due to a late offer or the late receipt of results, the applicant will be allowed to commence their studies but will only be allowed to enrol conditionally and on the basis of class attendance alone, until the clearance has been received.

- Applicants who are 'cleared' following an enhanced vetting and barring check will be allowed to enrol fully on their chosen course providing they have met all other outstanding conditions of their offer. For applicants who are not 'cleared', and the declared conviction(s) has not already been dealt with through the 'self declaration' criminal convictions process, the applicant will be referred to the Registrar to determine the suitability of the applicant for their chosen course.
- Applicants who fail to declare convictions, at the earliest opportunity, may be withdrawn from their course or be unable to qualify for their course of study according to the University's Student Disciplinary Policy.
- The University adheres to the guidelines and good practice of the Health and Care Professionals Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council and as such the Faculty of Health and Social Science operation a Suitability/DBS Panel for applicants. Applications for Social Work courses, with declared criminal convictions will be considered by the Suitability Panel for their suitability for both the course and the profession before being made an offer. Applicants for Nursing and Midwifery related courses will be considered by the DBS Panel.
- An applicant will be given the right of appeal which should be made to the University Secretary.
- Where information provided through a DBS check is challenged as incorrect by the applicant, the applicant should seek a correction with the DBS and notify the University who will hold the place until such time as the situation is resolved. If this does not take place prior to the start of the course the University may offer a deferred entry to the next available intake. The onus is on the applicant to ensure that the University is kept informed of any developments.

Under 18 Applicants

It is normal policy to admit students who are aged 18 years or over at the start of the course of study, and the admittance of students under 18 is considered to be an exceptional provision.

The University Policy on the admittance of Under 18 is available at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/course>

- The University will consider applicants who are under the age of 18 at the start of their chosen course of study on a case by case basis. The University will gain consent from the parent or guardian of any applicant under the age of 18 before an unconditional offer can be made.
- Students under the age of 18 whose parent/carer is not based in the UK are required to provide details to the International Office of a UK-based guardian who can act as a contact in the event of an emergency. The UK-based guardian can be a nominated friend or relative living in the UK, or a guardian appointed through a guardianship organisation which offers such services. An offer of a place on a course cannot be made unconditional until details of a UK-based guardian are provided in writing.
- Where the application is to study with one of the University's overseas collaborative partners, a guardian must be nominated within the country of study following the same process as outlined above.

Fraud

- Applicants' personal, qualification and educational information is reviewed for legitimacy at the point of application, this may include checking previous student records and, where an application is made via UCAS, using their fraud and verification tests.
- Applicants that are found to have included fraudulent claims or documentation (e.g. evidence of qualifications or grades) or where the University has been unable to authenticate any element of the application will be notified of the University's findings in writing and their application may be withdrawn.
- If evidence of fraud is identified in any application to a University of Bedfordshire course the offer of a place will be retracted and the fraud may be reported to relevant authorities, for example, the UCAS Fraud section, the professional accrediting body and UK Home Office Visas and Immigration. In such cases, refunds of any monies paid by the applicant to the University may not be refunded (see the University's Tuition Fees Policy at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/money/fees/policy>).
- The University may terminate a student's registration if he/she is found at a later stage to have submitted a fraudulent or plagiarised application to the University; this is outlined in the University Academic Regulations 3.1.5 and 3.1.6. The process is outlined in the Academic Discipline Policy <http://www.beds.ac.uk/aboutus/quality/regulations>

UK Home Office Visas and Immigration

- All international students will undergo checks to ensure the issuance of a CAS is compliant with the rules of UK Home Office Visas and Immigration..

Deferments, Change of Course, Withdrawal

Deferrals

- The University accepts deferred applications from applicants for the majority of its courses.
- Where a course does not accept deferred applications this is clearly stated in online and print publications.
- Any fees payable or terms & conditions are as of the year of entry and not the year of application.
- Applicants requesting deferral **after** they have accepted a place will need to put their request in writing to the relevant Admissions Office or Research Graduate School. For international applicants, requests should be put in writing to their agent or the relevant University regional admissions team. Details are on the offer letter or can be found at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/international/contacts-and-enquiries-international>
- Applicants may only defer on one occasion (for courses with multiple start dates the deferral policy covers one calendar year). If an applicant still wishes to undertake the course after a deferral period has lapsed, a new application will need to be made and they will be assessed against the entry criteria at the time of the new application.
- Should admission entry requirements change for a course which an applicant has already been allocated a deferred place, the admission entry requirements at the time of acceptance will apply.
- An applicant may not be given permission to defer if it is already known that the entry criteria will change for the following year or if they have been admitted with qualifications lower than the standard entry criteria.
- Deferred applications will be treated equally up until the point of confirmation. However, it may not be possible to allow an applicant to defer based on the confirmation strategy in the year of application. Any fees payable or terms & conditions are as of the year of entry and not the year of application.
- Applicants who are applying for a place during the clearing period of the UCAS admissions cycle will not be permitted to defer either prior to or after an offer has been made.

Change of Course

- Applicants may ask to be considered for a course other than the one to which they applied either before or after an offer of a place has been made. The University will consider such

requests if places are still available on the course being requested. If an applicant is not able to change course, their original offer will still stand.

- An applicant who is not successful in gaining a place on the course applied for either through failure at a selection event or for failing to meet the entry requirements for the course applied may be offered a place on an alternative course. This decision will be clearly outlined to the applicant as will the way in which this offer can be accepted or declined.
- Up until the point of registration an applicant for a taught course can request a change of course through Admissions, making their request in writing. If an applicant meets the entry criteria for the relevant course, and if places allow, the request will be considered by an Admissions Officer and the decision communicated to the applicant. Where an applicant does not meet the entry requirements for the requested course an Admissions Officer will refer the request to the relevant Faculty for an academic decision. For courses where there is an external regulatory requirement for interview and where the interview dates have concluded for the year it will not be possible for the request for a change of course to be considered. For research degrees, a request for a change of course should be sent to the Research Graduate School (RGS). Any such request will be considered by the RGS in collaboration with the relevant Faculty staff.
- All international applicants who wish to transfer their programme of study must receive approval from a member of the HTS Compliance Team in the International Office before their transfer can be implemented.
- **Any instance of an international applicant's programme of study being changed is reported to the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration via the International Office's HTS Compliance Team.**

Withdrawal

Withdrawal prior to registration

- Applicants are able to withdraw their application at any point during the application process by putting their request in writing to the relevant Admissions Officer. For international applicants, requests should be put in writing to their agent or the relevant University regional admissions team. Details are on the offer letter or can be found at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/international/contacts-and-enquiries-international>
- Applicants who have paid a deposit should see the University's Tuition Fees Policy for the refund policy <http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/money/fees/policy> . Refunds are usually only available if a visa application is refused. UK Home Office Visas and Immigration will be notified of the withdrawal.
- Applicants who withdraw their application for admission to a partner institution will receive a refund in accordance with the local arrangements made with the partner, which will be confirmed to the applicant.
- Once the withdrawal has been confirmed the University reserves the right not to reinstate the applicant should there be a subsequent change of decision.

Withdrawal after registration

- Applicants who register as a student with the University are able to withdraw from their course either at the point of registration or during the course of study.
- It is the responsibility of the Student Engagement and Mitigation Team staff to consider all withdrawals from Home and EU Students.
- UK and EU students should speak to a Student Engagement advisor who will discuss their intention to withdraw to ensure they receive confidential and impartial advice on the implications of their decision.
- International Students request to withdraw will be authorised by the International Office to ensure that advice relating to visas is given.
- The final administrative stage of the withdrawal process is carried out by the relevant Faculty Office or the Research Graduate School for UK and EU students and the International Office for International students.
- Further details on the process for withdrawing once an applicant registers as a student is available on the University website.

Readmission of Students after Withdrawal from studies

- University Regulation 3.4.8 confirms that students who have withdrawn from their studies may be eligible for readmission to the university <http://www.beds.ac.uk/aboutus/quality/regulations> – Where a student withdraws, or if a student's study with the University is terminated and the registration cancelled, the Board of Examiners (which, in the case of research degrees is RDC) considers the student's performance and the credits achieved to date and through the relevant Scheme Board confers the highest award for which the student is eligible. A student receiving an award in this way may be subsequently considered for re-admission under the arrangements for recognition of prior learning.
- Students must make a formal application to the university via the correct route described in the Application Routes Section and by made by any given application deadline.
- The application will be acknowledge and will follow the RPCL process where the Faculty will confirm if the student can be readmitted and if any exemptions from study will be given.
- The decision on readmission will be communicated to the applicant, along with details of any exemptions given and the level of tuition fee the applicant will be liable to pay.

Withdrawal or amendment to courses by University

- Under certain circumstances the University may need to amend or withdraw an offer from an applicant due to major changes to the course applied for or the removal of the chosen course from the University portfolio. The University will seek to minimise such disruption and provide appropriate support and guidance to facilitate the transfer of the applicants offer to another course or partner institution. The University will refund any tuition fees paid but will not offer any further financial recompense in the event of a withdrawal of a course.

Communications

Interaction between the University and applicants

- The preferred method of communication between the University and applicants is email, especially in relation to requests for further information or invitations to selection events. For international applicants who have applied via a recognised agent, it will be assumed the applicant's consent has been given to send communications to the nominated agent.
- The University is not responsible for correspondence sent to the applicant but not received which results in the opportunity to attend a selection event being withdrawn. Applicants are strongly advised to inform us of any changes to their email address.
- The University is committed to ensuring that any interaction with an applicant is conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner and it expects that any communication from an applicant is conducted in the same way. Applicants should note that the University will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour or language towards its employees or members of the wider University community during the admissions process.

Collection of Data, Contextual Data and Statistical monitoring

- Data provided by applicants as part of the admissions process forms the basis for the student record should an applicant register with the University.
- Data on applicants will be held and be used for monitoring purposes.
- Data on disabled applicants and applicants who have been in local authority care will be monitored by the University's Student Support Services to ensure appropriate pre-entry support can be provided
- Data on applicants gathered during the application process will also be used to confirm the award of University scholarships and bursaries.
- Data collected on applicants will be held in accordance with the Document Retention Schedule and the Data Protection Act.
- The University will receive contextual information on the circumstances of applicants, which may include postcode data relating to progression rates to higher education, average school performance at level 2, average school or college performance at level 3. Contextual data may be used for monitoring purposes but does not form part of the selection or decision making process.

Feedback and Appeals

General Principles

The University is committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions procedures for all our applicants. There may, however, be occasions when an applicant will wish to ask why their application has been rejected or believe that they have cause for a complaint or to make an appeal against the decision.

Feedback is defined as the communication from the University to an applicant, on request from the applicant, who has been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place. A **complaint** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction either about the way in which an application has been handled or the outcome of the selection or fees classification process – it may concern actions or inaction by the University or its staff. An **appeal** is defined as a request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.

Feedback

- The University will seek to give a reason for an unsuccessful decision at the point the applicant is notified of the decision. The University is able to provide written feedback to the applicant on the decision.
- Applicants can request feedback on their unsuccessful application at any time within the admissions cycle in which the application was made. Requests for feedback must be made in writing to the relevant Admissions Office, and feedback will only be provided in writing. International applicants should put their request in writing to their agent or University regional admissions team. Details are on the offer letter or can be found at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/international/contacts-and-enquiries-international>
- The University will respond within 15 working days providing a full response and the feedback provided will be with reference to the entry criteria and the overall demand for places.
- Requests for feedback on a particular applicant from a third party will receive a response indicating generally levels or competition and admissions criteria for the course applied. Information about the individual will not be divulged unless the third party is a recognised international representative working on behalf of an international applicant.
- Feedback given to applicants during the admissions process cannot be used as a basis for an appeal against an admissions decision.
- In all cases it will be made clear to an applicant who and when a new application may be considered, and confirmed that if a new application is received there is no guarantee that an offer will be given. All applications are considered afresh in competition with the cohort. There will be no discrimination against any applicant who requests and receives feedback.
- The feedback given is final. If an applicant does not consider that the admissions process has been followed then the appeals process must be used.
- Where the admissions decision is made by a University partner with approved authority to do so the request for feedback should be made directly to the partner.

Appeals against admissions decisions

A rejected applicant is entitled to appeal against a University decision on their application if there is evidence to suggest that:

- (i) The University has not adhered to its own policies and procedures
 - (ii) The University has not complied with relevant laws
 - (iii) The University has acted on a biased or prejudicial way in making its decision"
- Applicants are expected to make full, accurate and complete applications, demonstrating how the entry requirements for the course applied for have been or can be satisfactorily met, at the point of first submission.
 - It is expected that applicants will have requested feedback on the outcome of their application prior to making an appeal against the decision.

- Appeals cannot be made on the grounds of academic judgement.
- The appeals process includes an informal and a formal stage, it is expected that most appeals can be resolved amicably by using the informal stage but the University recognises that applicants may wish to move straight to the formal stage of the process.
- The University will seek to ensure that all appeals are treated seriously and constructively. If an appeal is upheld the University will take such action or provide such remedy as may be appropriate and will do so promptly. If an appeal is not upheld the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the applicant.
- There will be no discrimination against an applicant who makes an appeal.
- The Heads of Admissions (Home/EU, International and Research Graduate School) will monitor the number of appeals, both informal and formal, that are made within each application cycle and will be responsible for implementing or recommending changes to systems or procedures suggested by the nature of the appeals received.
- Advice about the appeals process may be obtained at any point during the informal or formal process from either the Senior Admissions Officer, Head of Admissions, or the Research Graduate School. Details of how to contact the Admissions Teams are available at www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply
- The Appeals process may be used by any individual who have submitted a formal application for full or part-time undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes at the University.

Stage One: Informal Appeal against an Admissions Decision

- Most appeals can be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis.
- The applicant should first raise their appeal in writing with the relevant Admissions Office where it will be passed to the appropriate Senior Admissions Officer. The applicant should outline the reasons for the appeal.
- The appeal must be made within fifteen working days of the original decision being communicated. Where an applicant has previously received feedback the informal appeal should be made within 10 working days of the feedback being received.
- Where an applicant is providing additional supporting documentation in relation to the appeal details should also be provided as to why this information was not available at the point of original submission.
- The Senior Admissions Officer will review the appeal and make a recommendation on the outcome of the appeal. If the recommendation falls within their remit for implementation then the appeal outcome shall be communicated directly to the applicant. Where the recommendation falls outside of the Senior Admissions Officer authority then the matter will be referred to the Head of Admission or the Director of Research Development for research degrees.
- The final outcome of the informal appeal will be notified in writing to the applicant within 15 working days of the informal appeal being received. If the appeal is not found the reasons for this decision will be communicated as well as details of the next step in the appeal process.

Stage Two: Formal Appeal against an Admissions Decision

- If the applicant is dissatisfied with the response received following stage one of the appeals process the formal appeal stage may be used. The formal appeal stage may also apply where an applicant deems the nature of their appeal is not suitable for the informal process.
- A formal appeal must be made in writing to the relevant Head of Admission and be received within 10 working days of the informal appeal outcome being made if appropriate.
- The written formal appeal should set out briefly: the nature of the appeal, the informal steps already taken, details of the response received and a statement as to the reason for the dissatisfaction with the outcome of the informal appeal, and the outcome that the application is seeking.
- The relevant Head of Admission will acknowledge the appeal.
- The relevant Head of Admission will review all the evidence provided by the applicant and will investigate the selection procedure followed and decision made.
- Where the relevant Head of Admission was involved in the informal appeal or in the original decision the formal appeal will be referred to a senior colleague.

- The applicant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within 15 working days of the submission. Where an appeal is upheld the applicant will be notified of the recommended remedial actions the University is recommending. Where an appeal is not found the applicant will be given the reasons for this finding.
- The outcome of the Formal Appeal will be final.

Monitoring and Review

The Deputy Vice Chancellor External Relations has responsibility for the development, operation and monitoring of the Admissions Policy comprising:

- Oversight and review of the admissions processes across the University to ensure that they fit with the University Mission and Strategy, and to ensure adherence to external and internal regulatory requirements.
- Monitoring of decision-making to ensure that it complies with the Admissions policy
- The training and development of staff involved in the admissions decision-making process.
- Monitoring of relevant data and statistics on applications, offers and acceptances to ensure that the admissions policy is being applied fairly and consistently within the University.
- The policy will normally be reviewed every three years by Academic Board. Feedback will be invited from staff working within Admissions Functions and Faculties.

4. Forms/Instructions

Definitions

Applicant – a person applying to the University of Bedfordshire for admission to a programme.

Student – a person registered by the University, studying and/or continuing to study for a University owned or delivered course which will be assessed and will normally lead to a University award.

International applicant – a person who will be required to pay the tuition fee rate at the overseas level and may be subject to UKVI rules.

Application – the formal process of applying for entry to the University made by an applicant.

Offer – a formal offer of a place on a course at the University.

Acceptance – the agreement of the applicant to accept the offer, including any academic and financial conditions.

5. Links/Dependencies

This policy should be read and its use considered with reference to:

University Tuition Fees Policy
 Academic Regulations
 Academic Discipline Policy and Procedure
 Policy for the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults
 Policy for Students Under the Age of 18 Years
 Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

6. Appendices

None