

# ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

## Policy statement for students under the age of 18

### 1. Introduction

Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) may occasionally admit students who are under the age of 18. In most cases the student will be approaching their eighteenth birthday. However, there are some instances where an enrolling student may remain under 18 for 12 months or more.

This policy and procedure sets out the approach AUB will take when processing applications from any individual who will be under 18 years of age at the start of the academic year. It outlines to prospective students, parent(s) / guardian(s) and staff the additional conditions and safeguards that must have formal agreement prior to admission. Any specific arrangements to support and safeguard the welfare of such students cease to apply at the age of 18.

AUB treats all students as independent and mature individuals. Students who are under the age of 18 years will be treated, as much as possible, in the same way.

AUB recognises that the Equality Act 2010 prevents unlawful discrimination against individuals on the basis of age and therefore we admit students on merit, including individuals who are under 18. However, under UK law, anyone under the age of 18 is legally considered a child and thus AUB has enhanced obligations until such students reach the age of 18, even if this period is relatively brief.

### 2. Context

Applicants and parent(s)/guardian(s) should consider that AUB is an adult environment; students are expected to act as adults and to assume an adult level of responsibility. Students are expected to have the necessary skills to study and live independently alongside people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds.

All applications will initially be considered on the basis of academic merit. If the applicant is not acceptable on academic grounds, they will be notified through the appropriate procedure that the application has been unsuccessful.

Applicants under the age of 18 at the start of their course will be:

- offered the same terms, conditions and pricing as those over 18;
- subject to AUB's academic regulations; no special or additional academic support is offered on the grounds of age;
- required to provide consent from a parent/guardian prior to enrolling on a course of study at AUB. This will consent to their enrolment and participation in student activities and to emergency medical treatment, amongst other things.

A copy of this policy and an “Under 18 Consent Form” will be sent to the applicant and parent(s)/guardian(s) to outline their obligations with an offer to study at AUB. A place on the course will not be confirmed without a returned, signed “Under 18 Consent Form”.

### 3. Parental responsibility

AUB is not able to take on the rights, responsibilities and authority that parents have in relation to a child, and will not act *in loco parentis* in relation to students who are under the age of 18 years. It is a condition of admission to AUB that the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student who is under the age of 18 years at the start of their course confirms, prior to admission, their acceptance of the arrangements set out in this policy by signing and returning an “Under 18 Consent Form”.

### 4. Contractual agreements

As a general rule, those under the age of 18 are unable to enter into binding legal contracts. Where contracts are required, for example relating to tuition fees or accommodation, AUB requires a parent(s)/guardian(s) to honour all obligations under any contracts with AUB that the student enters into prior to their 18th birthday. By signing the “Under 18 Consent Form”, the parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to this. Failure to pay debts due to AUB could result in the student’s withdrawal from the course.

### 5. Parental involvement and data protection

It is AUB’s policy to communicate directly with students in all aspects of their studies and not with parent(s)/guardian(s); this approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years. Although those under 18 are regarded as children under UK law, encompassing the UK General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act (2018), they have the legal right for information about them not to be disclosed without their explicit consent. This means that AUB is not able to give information to parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding the student’s progress, results or any other personal circumstance unless the student has given specific consent. However, if the student fails to pay any sums agreed on contract then it may be necessary to disclose this to parent(s) / guardian(s) and possibly to a debt collection agency.

### 6. Emergency Contact

Students under 18 will not be able to enrol on their course unless emergency contact information is provided on the “Under 18 Consent Form” and in AUB’s online Third Party Consent portal, completed as part of enrolment each year. Emergency contact details will be re- confirmed at enrolment each year and may be updated by the student at any point via MyAUB. It is the responsibility of the student to inform AUB immediately if there are changes to the emergency contact information provided.

## 7. Health

In an emergency situation, consent for urgent medical treatment may be required before parent(s)/guardian(s) can be contacted. AUB therefore requires parent(s)/guardian(s) to give their consent that, in the case of such an emergency, a senior member of AUB staff has permission to act on medical / police advice and do what is in the best interests of the child. By signing the "Under 18 Consent Form", the parent(s)/guardian(s) indicate their consent for AUB to act in this way. The student is responsible for ensuring that AUB has been informed of any disability or health requirements.

## 8. Academic course content

As part of the admission process, the Course Leader will conduct a risk assessment to ensure that the content of any course activities would be appropriate for students under the age of 18. This includes field trips and placements, and the use of age-classified learning materials such as films. Teaching staff on the Foundation Diploma course are DBS checked but parent(s)/guardian(s) should be aware that teaching staff on undergraduate courses will not routinely be DBS checked. Students, including those under the age of 18, may take part in life drawing classes with nude male or female models, and may access explicit content in some academic or artistic library books. By signing the "Under 18 Consent Form" the parent(s)/guardian(s) gives consent for the student to take part in these activities.

## 9. Educational visits

Courses may involve compulsory or optional educational visits, excursions or other periods of study away from AUB. AUB is not able to take any additional responsibility for a student who is under the age of 18 years in relation to such activities. By signing the "Under 18 Consent Form" the parent(s)/guardian(s) gives consent for the student to take part in these activities on that basis.

## 10. Acceptable use of the internet

Regardless of age, all students are expected to observe the University's rules about acceptable use of the internet.

## 11. Halls of residence

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should recognise that AUB halls of residence accommodation is generally intended for the use of students aged 18 and over. AUB will inform halls of residence staff of any students who are under the age of 18 but will not take any additional responsibility for these students, in terms of their accommodation needs. Halls of residence are not segregated by age or gender. By signing the "Under 18 Consent Form" the parent(s)/guardian(s) gives consent for the student to reside in halls of residence on this basis.

## 12. Staff – student relationships

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust (which may include members of AUB staff) to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years. AUB staff are not permitted to enter into a romantic or close relationship with any student who is under the age of 18.

### 13. Child protection and safeguarding

Under UK law, a person under the age of 18 years is a child. AUB has a responsibility to protect those under the age of 18 years from abuse and is obliged to report any suspicions or allegations of abuse to the relevant Children's Safeguarding services. Any such suspicions or allegations will be reported to AUB's safeguarding team. AUB's Safeguarding Policy is available at <https://aub.ac.uk/legal-and-governance/safeguarding>.

### 14. Age notification

It is the responsibility of the applicant to truthfully declare to AUB their correct date of birth. Course teams will be notified upon enrolment of any student who is under the age of 18 years at the start of the academic year.

### 15. Alcohol and tobacco

It is an offence for a person under 18 to purchase alcohol or tobacco or for anyone to sell alcohol or tobacco to anyone under 18. AUB will take reasonable steps to ensure that the law is not broken in relation to licensed premises under AUB's control but cannot undertake to supervise any individual student. Individuals are subject to random checks in relation to their age when using any licensed premises in the UK, including those on the AUB campus. By signing the "Under 18 Consent Form" the applicant is acknowledging the legal restrictions around purchasing or consuming age restricted products.

### 16. Holding office

Students who are under the age of 18 are encouraged to join Students' Union clubs and societies but are not able to hold office until after their 18th birthday (this is because Officers carry legal responsibilities). Participation in some AUBSU activities may also be limited.

### 17. Students sponsored under the Student Route who are under 18 at point of entry.

In addition to the 'Under 18 Consent Form' provided for admissions purposes, such students must also provide AUB with a letter from their parent(s)/official guardian(s) that confirms that they consent for the student to travel to the UK to live independently and study. This document must be provided prior to enrolment and a copy kept on the student's file as part of our duties as a Student Route sponsor as set out in paragraph ST21.2 of the Immigration Rules: [Appendix Student](#). We request that this letter is accompanied by a copy of the student's birth or adoption certificate or an alternative legal document confirming the relationship.

Related policies:

Admissions Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Data Protection Policy

All members of the University's community including staff, students, visitors and contractors have a responsibility to treat others fairly and respectfully regardless of the characteristics which may define their identity. These include the legally protected characteristics which are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion or belief (including lack of belief), Sex and Sexual orientation. The University has committed to provide a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness.

This Commitment has been subject to an equality impact assessment to ensure consideration with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

To be reviewed in March 2026.