

Admissions Policy (revised 2016)

The Mission of the Arts University Bournemouth is to be the leading professional Arts University dedicated to turning creativity to careers. Arts University Bournemouth aims to create a student body that is balanced and diverse in terms of cultural background and experience and recruit students who have the ability to successfully complete their chosen course.

Arts University Bournemouth will achieve these aims through:

- Encouraging applications from all those with the motivation and academic ability to thrive at the University, whatever their background
- Assessing each application on an individual basis
- Offering places to applicants who have the potential to successfully complete their course
- Transparency in the admissions process.

The principles and procedures through which the University assesses applications and offers places are designed to be:

- Fair
- Transparent
- Accessible
- Easily understood by applicants
- Consistently applied across all courses

This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined in the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education* and the Schwartz recommendations for Good Practice**, and complies with current legislation affecting the admission of students.

*The Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2013) Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education - October 2013

**Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004) Fair admissions to higher education: Recommendations for good practice

The University is committed to the provision of a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where unfair discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness. It has developed and implemented a Single Equalities Scheme (SES) to guide its work in this area. All the University policies and practices are designed to meet the principles of dignity, respect and fairness, and take account of the commitments set out in the SES.

1. Qualifications for entry

It is the policy of the University only to admit students who are able to demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and the ability to successfully complete its courses of study. Entry requirements for the University is set by Academic Board and reviewed annually.

Details of entry requirements for each course are available on the University's website and the UCAS website.

The University welcomes applications from appropriately qualified students, accepting a wide range of Level 3 qualifications, including, Foundation courses, International Baccalaureate, BTEC National Diploma, A levels, Advanced Diploma and Access to HE courses. International qualifications will be considered and evaluated by referring to independently published guides recognised within the United Kingdom higher education sector such as UK NARIC and UCAS.

The University will accept applications to the 2nd and 3rd year of degree courses, if there are vacancies, application should be made via UCAS and applicants will be offered an interview or an electronic portfolio review.

The University will accept applications from mature candidates (students over 21 years, as defined by UCAS)

All applicants should apply via UCAS. Applicants aged 21 or over who do not hold the entrance requirements, may still be considered by AUB. A wide range of credentials, including work experience and training, may be accepted as evidence of capacity to benefit from a degree course and to complete it successfully. Accreditation of prior learning (APL) can be used in further and higher education for the purpose of entry onto a course. Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) is an extension of APL and includes assessed learning gained from work experience.

Applicants who have nonstandard qualifications or who wish work experience to be taken into account as part of their application, will be considered on an individual basis, in line with the general aims and principles of the Admissions Policy and with the terms of the Accreditation of Prior Experience/ Learning (AP(E)L) Policy.

The University does not have the facility to offer level 2 qualifications to students and so expects all applicants to hold, or be in the process of obtaining, at least 5 GCSE subjects at grade C or above, or equivalent; which must include English and Mathematics.

Teaching and assessment will take place in English. Therefore, applicants must be competent in the English language and we require at least GCSE English at grade C or an equivalent qualification.

If you are not a national of a majority English speaking country (eg Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British (not including the British National Overseas category) Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, New Zealand, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, USA) and you have not completed your education in one of the above countries you will need to submit evidence of meeting the University's minimum English Language requirements before starting your course.

International applicants who require a student visa may have to take an English language test approved by the UKVI, such as IELTS. International applicants should contact international@aub.ac.uk for further information and advice.

2. Monitoring

Academic Board is responsible for the setting of entry criteria for courses. Decisions on applications are made by academic staff and processed centrally in Registry by the Admissions Team in accordance with the admissions policy.

3. Commitment to consistency, fairness and transparency

The University website shall provide clear information on the entry criteria, both academic and non-academic, for each course. The University shall publish its Admissions Policy as well as its principles and procedures on its website. Clear criteria for entry will be provided for each course. These criteria shall be replicated by the University on its website, on the UCAS website and in any publications. All applications shall be considered against these criteria.

Information for applicants includes:

- Information in any prospectus, directory and on the University web site
- UCAS website, this includes: accepted qualifications, standard offers, interview information including what is expected in a portfolio, details of the interview process.
- Pre course enquiries for Home and EU students are handled by Admissions. Enquiries from Overseas and Islands students are handled by the International Office.
- Information at Open Days includes course specific talks and tours of the course area by academic staff. Admissions staff will give talks on the application process from application to confirmation and Student Support staff cover accommodation, finance and support services.
- Applicants who are called to interview are sent links to Portfolio Guides and comprehensive guidance which covers the interview process, types of offer and how

feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

- Applicants holding an offer are contacted frequently via the applicant portal (MyApplication) with information about their course, accommodation and also to complete tasks in preparation for enrolment, such as updating addresses and submitting an ID photograph.
- All applicants holding a firm offer are sent a Welcome Pack during late summer.

The Senior Admissions Officer will ensure all HE course information; the entry requirements and interview information are correctly listed on the UCAS website and will update UCAS on any changes or additions.

Marketing will publish publicity materials, with the prior approval of the Deans.

All student admissions are coordinated by a centralised admissions team to ensure fairness and consistency. The Admissions team, within Registry, must follow the procedures and principles set out in this document and ensure that they work in a way that is consistent with the University's Admissions Policy. All applications are checked by admissions to ensure they are complete, meet minimum entry requirements, fee status is checked and that the information held in SITS is accurate.

4. Training

All staff involved in admissions will have regular briefings and training. Training for the Admissions Team and the International office is mainly in-house, provided by the Senior Admissions Officer who produces an Admissions Guide. This guide is updated prior to the start of each cycle. The Admissions team also attend regular UCAS training, SITS training and use and refer to UCAS manuals and SPA good practice guides.

The Senior Admissions Officer provides an annual training session to all staff involved in interviews and the admissions process which highlights issues such as UCAS changes, qualification updates and changes to internal procedures relating to admissions. A Guide to HE Admissions and Paperless processing for Academic staff is updated annually and is available on the intranet and distributed after training sessions at the start of the admissions cycle.

It is the responsibility of the Deans to ensure that all academic staff involved in the admissions process understand and support the University's admissions aims, principles and procedures, are competent to make sound and fair judgments, are appropriately trained and have sufficient resources and time to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Admissions Tutors work closely with the staff of the Admissions team within Registry.

5. Processing Applications

In order to ensure consistency and fairness, the general principles and procedures set out in this paper must be followed by all staff.

All applications are considered on an equal basis, against entry criteria. Applications are not segregated by type of educational institution attended or by any other criteria. Each application will be treated individually and a range of criteria from the application will be taken into account to identify the applicant's ability to meet the demands of the course. This includes:

- Past academic performance
- School / college / employer reference
- Predicted qualifications/ grades
- Commitment, motivation and potential
- Relevant experience
- Match between applicants and correct course.

In agreement with the Deans, course leaders may decide to offer interviews to all applicants who meet or will meet entry requirements. Courses with high numbers of applications may choose to select those they wish to interview. These courses will offer interviews to all applicants who hold or will hold a certain level of qualification and then select from the remaining applicants those they judge to be suitable for the course.

Most courses will interview all applicants who meet entry requirements.

The University will publish portfolio guides and a simple guide to the application process on its website. Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend an Open Day if possible. At Open Days staff are available to give information about the AUB and its facilities, the courses, advice on course choice and application procedures.

Applicants may be requested to complete a Fee Status Assessment Form to determine their correct fee status.

Admissions will record all key communication with the applicant on their application record in E:Vision.

6. Interviews

(BA (Hons) Acting and BA (Hons) Dance hold auditions: the term interview encompasses both interviews and auditions)

Applicants invited to interview will be notified by email and via MyApplication at least two weeks before the interview date. Applicants respond via MyApplication and can accept or request a reschedule. Rescheduling requests will be accommodated whenever possible.

Interviews intended to select students must be conducted by two members of staff who have undergone Admissions Training; or a trained member of staff and a student ambassador, however students in attendance at interviews are not decision makers and are only present to assist with the smooth running of the day.

The interview and consequent decision-making will be consistent with the University's policy on equal opportunities. Questions related to the race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion or age of the applicant must not be raised either at the interview or in subsequent discussion. However, applicants are asked to disclose any disability to the University prior to interview to ensure that any necessary adjustments can be made to assist the process. The faculty must set criteria for measuring a candidate's performance at interview.

There is a standard interview process used by all staff to ensure parity. All decisions at interview are recorded via E: Vision and then returned electronically to Admissions for processing. Course staff may choose to record their feedback electronically or via a paper version of this form, this will then be uploaded via in E: Vision.

When viewing portfolios admissions tutors are looking for: evidence of ability, motivation and potential. The admission tutor may ask the applicant to discuss the work in their portfolio.

For applicants who are based outside the UK and are unable to attend interviews Admissions have a portfolio request process which invites applicants to send a link to an online portfolio, or submit a portfolio to admissions by email or post. Admissions may also arrange a Skype interview.

The University does not require applicants to undergo additional tests at interview.

7. Late Applications

Applicants who apply by the UCAS equal consideration deadline will receive full and equal consideration. Later applications will be considered on an individual basis if there are still places available on the relevant course.

Late applications to Preparation for HE course and Post Graduate courses will be considered on an individual basis, and only where there are still places available on the course.

8. Criteria for assessing applicants

The Deans of Faculty must set criteria that support the AUB admissions aims and are in accordance with the principles and procedures. Admissions tutors are expected to use the criteria set to decide whether

an offer can be made. These criteria include academic achievement and potential as well as other non-academic factors. The Admissions Team will check applicant qualifications to ensure the correct offer is made and that applicants meet, or will meet, academic entry requirements.

The Deans of Faculty may set entry requirements that are higher than those set by Academic Board and may insist on specified performance in a particular subject at GCSE, A level or other examination.

The Personal Statement and Reference provide important supplementary indications of ability, motivation and potential, as well as information about personal circumstances. They are read and taken into account in reaching a decision. Criteria for assessing the Personal Statement may include, for example:

- Demonstrated interest in and commitment to the subject
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding
- Appropriateness of the course in relation to the candidate's declared interests and career aspirations
- Non-academic achievement or extra-curricular interests that indicate the likely contribution a candidate will make to the life of the University.

However Academic staff must be aware that references can vary from the very brief to the expansive and are not within the control of the applicant.

Allowance shall be made for any candidate with verified exceptional circumstances or who has faced difficult challenges in a positive way, where these are made known to the University (e.g. illness, death of a parent, disrupted education, refugee status). Admissions tutors may decide to offer a place to a candidate whose academic performance appears to have been affected by such circumstances and who might otherwise have been expected to do better.

Candidates are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability or age. No condition of entry shall be imposed which members of a particular group are less likely to be able to satisfy than other applicants not of that group, unless such a condition is justifiable on academic grounds.

Consideration of applications from students who declare a disability is based on the same criteria and principles as for other candidates. Assistance will be given to disabled applicants through the Senior Disability Officer to ensure that their needs can be met by the University to enable them to successfully complete their chosen course. The Senior Disability Officer is automatically notified of all applicants who declare a disability by automated report. The Senior Disability Officer is also notified if an applicant with a disability is invited to interview and is able to contact them prior to interview to make any necessary arrangements to assist the applicant. Students are expected to manage their life circumstances, and should not accept a place onto a course if they are unable to commit sufficient time to the course.

Applications from students who have non-standard qualifications or who wish work or life experience to be taken into account as part of their application will be considered on an individual basis.

The University does not set any age requirements for undergraduate courses; but applicants will be expected to demonstrate a mature approach to the study of their subject which includes demonstrable skills of critical analysis, contextual knowledge and the ability to manage their own time without the external imposition of a full daily timetable.

There is a minimum age of 16 on 1st September in year of entry for Preparation for HE courses. Applicants to the Foundation Diploma in Art and Design will normally have completed an A level, or equivalent level 3 course.

Applicants are required to disclose relevant criminal convictions on the application form. Admissions staff will disregard any criminal convictions which are spent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, unless the programme of study is likely to bring the student into contact with children or vulnerable adults. Where an applicant has an unspent (or spent, in relevant cases) conviction, a decision on whether to offer a place will be made by the Dean in consultation with the Course Leader.

9. UCAS Similarity Detection Service and Fraudulent applications

All personal statements supporting applications to higher education processed through UCAS are checked with a specially developed version of the similarity detection system. Institutions are notified of any cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect collusion. Applicants are also notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection Service has identified their personal statement as potentially plagiarised. These applicants may be requested to submit a new personal statement if they are selected for interview. UCAS has a verification unit working to identify fraudulent applications. Any attempt by applicants to provide false, misleading information could lead to their application being cancelled.

The University may at any time ask the applicant, their referee or their employer to provide more information about the application (for example, proof of identity, evidence to assess fee status, copies of qualifications or employment history).

The discovery that any information disclosed on an application or enrolment form is fraudulent, or the omission of relevant information (for example an unspent criminal conviction) will result in the offer of a place being withdrawn. This includes failure to disclose qualifications of an equivalent or higher level to the award for which the student is enrolled.

The University is required to take reasonable steps to ensure applicants have declared any qualifications gained at an equivalent or higher level to the award for which they are applying. This will involve consulting databases from statutory agencies to ascertain any previous qualifications gained.

Should this information come to light following enrolment, this will normally lead to cancellation of the student's registration on a University course.

The University reserves the right to exclude a candidate who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular course or for attendance at the University in general.

10. Responsibility of applicants in the application process

It is the responsibility of applicants to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the University of any changes or corrections to the original application. By accepting an offer the applicant agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the University. If the University becomes aware that an applicant, prior to registering as a student, has failed to abide by these rules and regulations an offer to study may be withdrawn.

In the light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn. The University also reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers.

The University reserves the right to exclude a candidate who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular programme according to individual circumstances.

11. Offers

Faculty will inform the Senior Admissions Officer of their offer range and criteria.

The levels of conditional offers made must normally be in line with published entry requirements and may not vary substantially from these.

Different levels of offer may be made to meet individual circumstances. These will not be higher than the standard offer. They are not made on the basis of the educational sector from which the candidate is applying.

After interview decisions are sent electronically to UCAS. Applicants should allow up to 10 days for their application to be processed. However the admissions team strives to process all decisions as quickly as possible, the majority of decisions will be sent to UCAS within 3 working days of the interview taking place.

An offer letter is then sent from admissions to the applicant by mail. This letter states the conditions of offer, course, start and end date. A copy of the terms of offer is sent electronically via MyApplication. All HE

applicants are also sent a booklet "Congratulations" which provides information about AUB, accommodation and the key policies which will affect them as students.

Where an applicant has applied through UCAS the University will communicate our decision through the official channels of UCAS.

Where an applicant has applied directly to the University, a formal decision will be made and communicated directly to the applicant by the central Admissions office.

Where a candidate has applied for one course and is not successful, an alternative programme may be offered. The alternative offer will be officially communicated via UCAS, and candidates will also be contacted by the University to confirm and discuss a changed offer decision.

An offer, whether conditional or unconditional, will be made in good faith taking into account information as supplied by the applicant and/or referee at the time of the application

The Admissions Office is responsible for all communications with UCAS, including the transmission of admissions decisions.

12. Confirmation of results

'Confirmation' refers to the period from July to August each year when the University receives examination results for applicants who have accepted Conditional offers. Applicants who achieve the grades required by their Conditional offer have their place confirmed. Applications from candidates who have not met the required grades exactly are reviewed and their places may be confirmed if space is available, although no guarantee is made that this will be possible.

All conditions of offers must be met in full by 12 noon on the 31 August to guarantee a place for entry in the year of application. If conditions are met after this point we may be able to confirm a deferred place.

The Confirmation procedure includes receiving and processing electronic data from UCAS which, in turn, receives and processes electronic results data from the examination boards. The University reserves the right to amend the offer in light of an electronic error.

Applicants who narrowly miss meeting the academic requirements in their conditional offer, may be accepted at "Confirmation", provided that their qualifications do not fall below the minimum entry level and there are vacancies.

The University may accept students during the "Clearing" period with grades lower than the normal mainstream requirement, should there be places available. All applicants must meet the minimum entry level.

13. International Students and confirmation

As part of the University's UKVI Tier 4 Sponsor Licence, the University is required to view and maintain copies of all international students' current passport and visa (valid for study at the Arts University) along with original qualification documents on the basis of which admission was granted to the University.

The University undertakes these checks as part of the registration process upon arrival. We cannot permit an international student to enrol/register at the University without undertaking this process. In addition to the documentation required as part of our UKVI Tier 4 Sponsor Licence commitments we will also store any other documentation sent to us in support of an application.

14. Applicants to whom an offer is not made

The University sends feedback to every applicant to whom it is unable to make an offer. HEIs are able to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants through UCAS. Through UCAS the admissions team send an unsuccessful (REJ) decision together with a brief reason for the rejection. The reason for rejection text is available for applicants to view on Track. This is followed up by a portal message via My Application outlining the reason for rejection

Feedback will only be provided to the applicants themselves and will be in reference to the selection criteria and admissions processes. Applicants not selected for interview and who will not be made an offer will be notified within 4 weeks either directly by the University or via UCAS

Any request for any further feedback must be requested in writing. Applicants should contact admissions@aub.ac.uk by email. Written feedback will be sent to applicants by the Senior Admissions Officer Applicants should not contact the course leader or the course teams. The provision of further feedback does not constitute a reconsideration of an application. The decision made by the course team and approved by the Course Leader is final.

Any concerns that the University's admissions principles and procedures have been incorrectly implemented may be addressed to the Director of Finance and Planning.

15. Requests for Deferral or withdrawal

If an applicant wishes to request a deferral of entry to the following year, they should indicate this on their application form, or put in a request by email to Admissions as soon as possible after submitting an application. Requests for deferral after an offer has been made will be considered. Applicants should contact the Admissions team by email admissions@aub.ac.uk

Applicants who wish to withdraw after an offer has been made must contact admissions@aub.ac.uk

Admissions Policy on the acceptance of ex-offenders

The University takes very seriously its duty of care to its existing staff and students. The University will consider the wider issues, including the interests and safety of the University community prior to offering any applicant a place to study. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Nature of the offence
- Length of time since the offence
- Number of offences
- Emotional maturity of the applicant at the time of the offence
- Punishment given.

Particular care will be taken where it is likely that, during the program of study, students are likely to come into contact with children or with vulnerable adults.

Applicants who declare a criminal conviction on an application form may be put on hold until the application has been considered by an Admissions Panel. The University has the right to reject any application or later terminate registration from an individual who is subsequently found to have omitted or falsified information in relation to his/her application.

16. Changes to Courses

Occasionally it may be necessary to make changes to a course between the time of an offer of a place is made and the enrolment of students onto that course. If this occurs, the University will ensure that prospective students are informed at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to a course and will be advised of all options open to them. This may include an offer onto a similar course in a similar subject area.

In the event of a degree course not running applicants will be advised by admissions and sent a UCAS 'notification of discontinued course' form. Applicants will be contacted as soon as possible and where possible an alternate course will be offered. Applicants who do not wish to be considered for another course at AUB will be able to choose another institution and course via UCAS.

17. Scholarship and Bursaries

The University has entered into an Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) which sets out how it will safeguard and promote fair access. The bursaries and scholarships related to

the University Access Agreement for undergraduate applicants will be administered separately from applications. From time to time the University will consider formal links to other courses or schools which may lead to formal arrangements or to the establishment of compacts. These links may be part of the University's Widening Participation work.

18. Sharing data with Student Finance England (SFE)

Applicants whose normal residence is England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be invited to allow UCAS to share relevant details of their application with Student Finance. This will allow the SFE to have up to date information about where an applicant has been placed after confirmation and for which course; which in turn, will assist students in their completion of applications for financial support and its subsequent distribution at the start of the course.

In order for us to assess whether applicants are eligible both applicant and sponsor (parent/carer/guardian) must agree to share information regarding applying for bursaries. If applicants do not do this then it is important that both the applicants and sponsor contact Student Finance.

19. Access Agreement

The University has devised a range of support mechanisms to encourage applications from, and subsequent retention of, students from under-represented groups.

The University's Access Agreement as approved by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and includes information on bursaries and other financial support for students. The full scope of this support can be seen in the Access Agreement which will be available online.

Further Information about The Access to Learning Fund (for UK Higher Education students), Learner Support Fund (for UK and EU Prep HE students), and Overseas Emergency Fund (for international students) is available online or from Student Support. Email: studentadvice@aub.ac.uk

20. Data Protection

In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 the University must protect the information disclosed on any aspect of an application. In line with this legislation we are unable to discuss any aspect of an application with a third party unless we receive confirmation from the applicant in writing stating UCAS number or student number, course applied for, date of birth, details of the person(s) the applicant wishes to allow this privilege and a satisfactory reason why this is required. This does not mean that we will refuse to accept information from a third party with reference to an application but we will not disclose information without permission.

Admissions staff are not in the position to share the applicant's personal details with the requested third party. The details could be the applicants address or telephone number, date of birth or name of School. If the third party member believes these details are wrong Admissions will not accept changes from anyone other than the applicant in writing.

21. Admissions Complaints Procedure

We aim to handle complaints confidentially, fairly and quickly. If an applicant complains-

- We will endeavour to solve problems informally (where appropriate)
- We will acknowledge receipt of the referred complaint within seven working days.
- We aim to provide a full response to the complaint within 20 working days.
- We will record all complaints and the action taken and retain details on file.

22. How to make a complaint

Complaints may be made in person, by phone, email or by letter to:

Admissions - Arts University Bournemouth, Wallisdown, Poole BH12 5HH Telephone:

01202 363384 or email admissions@aub.ac.uk

Complaints made in person or by phone will, for the most part, be resolved immediately and informally by members of the admissions team. If this is not possible then a full response will be provided within 20 working days. Formal written complaints will be referred to the Senior Admissions Officer and acknowledged within seven working days.

Applicants will be kept informed of the progress of their complaint and once investigated will be informed of the outcome. If at any stage of the investigation, the deadline for providing a full response is likely to be missed applicants will be informed and given the reason for the delay and a new date when a full response is expected.

23. Telephone Complaints

The majority of telephone complaints will be dealt with informally by a member of the admission team. If a response satisfies the complainant then the details are recorded and retained on file.

If a complaint cannot be dealt with immediately, the details should be recorded so that the matter can be properly referred and investigated. There will be times when the person receiving the complaint is not the right person to deal with it. In that case the caller, or the information, will be passed to the member of staff responsible.

24. Written Complaints

All written complaints will be recorded and should be brought to the attention of the Senior Admissions Officer. Some will be dealt with 'on the spot' others will require further investigation or referral. Where a complaint requires referral and investigation:

An acknowledgement will be sent within seven working days.

The reply will set out the complaint and say whether or not a mistake has been made and give a reason for the decision. All written complaints will receive a written reply, either by email or post, within 20 days, or notification of reason for any delay.

A complaint that cannot be resolved by Admissions will be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.