

SECRETARIAT & LEGAL SERVICES

ACADEMIC POLICY SUMMARY SHEET

NAME OF ACADEMIC POLICY:	Admissions Policy
PURPOSE OF POLICY AND WHOM IT APPLIES TO:	<p>The policy sets out the guiding principles and procedures by which the University considers undergraduate and postgraduate applications to its programmes.</p> <p>The policy applies to all staff involved with admissions and prospective students.</p>
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE WITH ROUTE OF APPROVAL:	<p>Academic Board approved the revised policy on 16 June 2010.</p> <p>Revised policy approved by Academic Affairs Committee.</p>
LEAD STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS UPDATE:	University Registrar
PERSONS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING POLICY:	The draft policy was considered by members of Academic Board and the Academic Affairs Committee.
EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT UNDERTAKEN?	To be undertaken.
POLICY FINALLY APPROVED BY:	Academic Board on 16 June 2010
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	10 December 2008 and revised annually
DETAIL OF DISSEMINATION:	The revised policy was circulated to relevant staff in June 2010 and is available on the Secretariat's portal site.
PROPOSED DATE OF REVIEW	To be confirmed
SECRETARIAT OFFICER – MAIN CONTACT:	Officer to Academic Affairs Committee
DATE:	28 June 2010

PRINCIPLES

1. The University welcomes difference and diversity among its students and seeks to help each one to flourish academically and personally through its programmes. Admission, therefore, is governed by two principles:
 - the applicant's ability to benefit from the chosen course
 - fair and equal treatment for all applicants

RESPONSIBILITIES

2. The University is responsible for:
 - considering each application solely on its merits in relation to the programme, without any other discrimination
 - working to match the needs of each applicant to the most suitable course of study
 - responding clearly and promptly to all applications
 - treating the information within each application as confidential
3. Applicants are responsible for giving the University honest and full statements of their qualifications and/or prior experience and needs, including:
 - qualifications achieved through formal learning
 - relevant professional or industrial experience or training
 - other evidence of relevant learning achieved through experience
 - disabilities and any specific needs they have for support in their learning
 - any criminal convictions either in the UK or abroad

BASIS FOR ADMISSION

4. The University accepts a wide range of qualifications as the basis for entry, including:
 - GCE A Levels and/or AVCE
 - GCE AS Levels and/or AS VCE Levels
 - AVCE Double Award (which replaced the Advanced GNVQ)
 - Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers
 - Irish Leaving Certificate
 - Welsh Baccalaureate Diploma

- QAA recognised Access to Higher Education courses
- European and International Baccalaureate Diplomas
- AQA Baccalaureate Diploma
- BTEC National Award/Diploma Level Three
- Advanced Diplomas
- Extended Project
- Equivalent international qualification

The University also admits students on the basis of learning gained through experience. The University does not impose any age restrictions on admission.

5. The University sets minimum entrance requirements for awards for those applying on the basis of formal qualifications:
 - individual courses have specific entrance requirements which may be higher but will not be lower than the University minimum requirements. Some courses also require different skills and abilities from academic qualifications, for example in art and design. In determining any specific requirements, the University will make available to applicants the knowledge and skills required in relation to the content and learning outcomes of the course.
 - the criteria and procedures, including interview, by which applicants will be assessed as suitable for admission.
6. The University prospectus and website provides clear guidance on course specific entry requirements. Applicants are advised to contact the University before submitting an application.
7. In exceptional cases the University Registrar or nominee, on recommendation of the Dean of Faculty, may waive the course entry requirements for a particular applicant. In such cases, the University Registrar or nominee will report the decision and reason(s) to the relevant Academic Board committee.
8. Those applying on the basis of previous learning through experience must be able to supply valid evidence that such learning is relevant, appropriate and current. The University admissions staff will advise such applicants on the relevance of their experience and help them identify the evidence required.

UNIVERSITY MINIMUM ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

9. The minimum requirements relate to those applying on the basis of recognised qualifications. For those without such qualifications, a wide range of previous experience can be taken into account (see below).
10. AS level passes in GCE/VCE qualifications are acceptable once the minimum requirement has been met (see paragraphs 12-14).

11. All applicants must have achieved competence in English Language which can be evidenced by:
- GCSE English Language at grade C or above (or equivalent)
 - Key Skills Level 2 Communication
 - a score of at least 6.0 in the IELTS examination; or a score of at least 550 in TOEFL or 79 in TOEFL (internet-based), or equivalent
 - passing the University's internal English Language Test
 - Holding an HE level award, delivered and assessed in English, by an institution recognised by the University of Lincoln

In exceptional cases, the Dean of Faculty may waive the standard English Language competency requirement for particular applicants. A written case shall be submitted to the relevant Dean for approval and the performance of students admitted on this basis shall be reported to the relevant Academic Board Committee on an annual basis.

HNC, HND or Foundation Degree Programmes

12. Minimum requirement:
- 40 UCAS points from one 6-unit A Level or 12 unit VCE A Level qualifications, plus three GCSEs at grade C or above
or
 - equivalent vocational, professional or international qualifications

Bachelor's Degree Programmes

13. Minimum requirement:
- 80 UCAS points from two 6-unit A Levels or one 12-unit VCE A Level qualification, plus three GCSEs at grade C or above.
or
 - a relevant access, foundation course or international equivalent qualification
or
 - an appropriate portfolio of work in art or design

Integrated Master's Degree Programmes

14. Minimum requirement:
- 120 UCAS points from two 6-unit A levels or one 12-unit VCE A Level qualification, plus three GCSEs at grade C or above
 - or
 - international equivalent qualification.

Graduate and Postgraduate Programmes

15. Minimum requirement for graduate and postgraduate certificates and diplomas:
- degree or professional qualification recognised as equivalent
 - or
 - previous related experience in business, industry or the professions
16. Minimum requirement for taught masters (MA and MSc) or masters of research (MRes) programmes:
- honours degree (or international equivalent qualification) and/or evidence of sufficient subject expertise that the applicant can attain HE level M in that subject
 - or
 - substantial related experience in business, industry or the professions
 - or
 - a substantial appropriate portfolio in art or design
17. Minimum requirement for taught masters of business administration (MBA):
- honours degree, second class or above, or international equivalent qualification
 - two years relevant work experience

In exceptional cases the Dean of Faculty (or nominee) may waive the standard MBA entry requirements for particular applicants. The performance of students admitted on this basis shall be reported to the relevant Academic Board committee on an annual basis.

18. Minimum requirement for MPhil and MPhil with transfer to PhD programmes:
- honours degree at 1st or 2nd class level or international equivalent qualification
 - or
 - substantial experience within the proposed field of study accepted as equivalent to such an honours degree

or

- taught masters or master of research degree

19. Minimum requirement for doctoral programmes:

- masters degree from a UK university or international or professional equivalent

or

- other qualification and/or experience which demonstrates the knowledge and skills equivalent to a masters degree

20. Minimum requirement for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology:

- honours degree in Psychology at 1st or 2nd class level, or international equivalent

or

- equivalent qualification if evidence is provided of academic ability in psychology at post graduate level

and

- the applicant must meet the essential characteristics of the NHS person specification for a Clinical Psychologist in Training.

and

- have achieved GCSE English Language at grade C or above (or equivalent) or one of the following:
 - a British Council IELTS average final score of 7.0 with a minimum of 5.5 in any element, achieved no more than 2 years prior to admission.
 - a TOEFL paper-based score of 600 or computer based score of 250, including in either case a minimum score of 4.5 in the test of Written English, achieved no more than 2 years prior to admission.
 - applicants with special permission of the relevant competent authority may, based on written evidence, be excluded from this requirement.

21. Minimum requirement for a Doctorate in Journalism:

- first or second class honours degree or international equivalent qualification or professional qualification recognised as equivalent to an honours degree

and

- substantial work experience in the field of Journalism

ADMISSION ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE¹

22. The University will admit students on the basis of previous learning through experience, provided it can be substantiated on application, is relevant to the award applied for, and provides sufficient evidence of the applicant's ability to benefit from the award. Examples may include applicants with work experience in the legal, business or accountancy sectors.
23. Each applicant is responsible for making the claim of knowledge and skills achieved through experience, and for providing adequate supporting evidence. If an applicant without formal qualifications is applying for the entry level of an award, the application must be supported by sufficient evidence of relevant experience, commitment to the subject, and ability to undertake an academic qualification. The University will advise applicants individually of what is necessary, but the application is handled through the normal admissions procedures for that award. Further information is available in the Accreditation of Prior Learning and Student Handbook.
24. Learning through experience can also be the basis for admission with advanced standing (see below). This entails matching the applicant's experience against the learning outcomes of specific sections of the chosen programme, and is a more complex procedure. Again, the University will advise applicants of the process and, without prejudice to the final decision, whether they have a likely case for making such an application.

ADMISSION WITH ADVANCED STANDING

25. Applicants may be admitted to programmes at a higher stage than the normal entry point if they can demonstrate either sufficient accredited learning (for example, from previous qualifications or part-qualifications) or sufficient and appropriate experience or training. The point at which they enter the programme will depend upon the level and range of their previous attainment.
26. Under the national credit accumulation and transfer scheme, students may transfer appropriate credits gained from other programmes or other universities or colleges. Students transferring such credits will not have to re-take elements for which they have already gained credit, providing that the credit is accepted as appropriate for the programme to which they are transferring. Students with credits which are less directly appropriate may be required to take additional credits to meet the learning outcomes of their new programme.

¹ As outlined in the University's Policy on Accreditation of Prior Learning

27. Applicants may also enter a programme at a higher than normal entry level on the basis of either previous learning through experience or of non-credit bearing qualifications, provided that they can provide sufficient and robust evidence that such previous learning can take the place of entry-level learning for the programme in question. These students will also not have to re-take elements in which they can clearly demonstrate knowledge and competence, and will be exempted from them.
28. In all cases, any entitlement to advanced standing admission must be established before enrolment. Further information is available in the Accreditation of Prior Learning and Student Handbook.

APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES E.G. DYSLEXIA²

29. The University recognises that disabled students are an integral part of the academic community, and makes every effort to meet the needs of applicants with disabilities. It cannot, however, guarantee to meet those needs in every case.
30. All applications are first considered on their academic merits through the standard selection process. The University sends information on its services to all applicants offered a place on the course and who have disclosed they possess a disability. A Disability Advisor may contact an applicant to discuss their individual needs.

APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

31. As part of the applications process, applicants are asked whether they have any 'relevant criminal convictions'. Relevant criminal convictions are only those concerned with violence, sexual offences, drugs, firearms, arson and terrorism. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant (except for applicants who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults; see paragraph 31 below) and need not be disclosed **except** in the circumstances set out below.

The circumstances are if:

- The applicant has a relevant criminal conviction that is not spent, or is serving a prison sentence for a relevant criminal conviction.

² The University has a specific admissions procedure for applicants with disabilities - the details of which are available on request.

32. If the programme of study is likely to bring the applicant into contact with children or vulnerable adults then 'spent' criminal convictions must be declared on application. In such cases information will be sought regarding all cautions and convictions.
33. All applicants who have declared convictions first pass through the standard selection process (please refer to paragraphs 30-31). This process ignores the conviction and makes an assessment of suitability on academic grounds alone.
34. Once an application has been accepted on academic grounds, applicants will be required to provide further information in relation to the conviction, which will be considered by the University's Special Admissions Panel. The Panel will consist of at least three members convened by the University Registrar (or nominee).
35. In making any decision, the Panel must consider the University's duty of care to its students and staff and the need to safeguard its property, and must take account of:
 - the nature and seriousness of the offence
 - the circumstances leading up to the offence
 - the factors bearing on the impact of the offence (e.g. when was it committed? Does the applicant have a history of repeat offences or was it a one-off?)
 - whether the applicant is still serving a sentence for the conviction
 - the applicant's achievements since the conviction (to show that they have tried to put the offence, or that period in their life when they committed the offence, behind them)
36. The Panel's decision is final and is based on the relevance or otherwise of the conviction to either the programme or the University in the light of its assessment of the risks involved.
37. Applicants who have been rejected on the basis of a criminal conviction may re-apply at a future date, when they can demonstrate more securely that they have put such a conviction behind them.
38. Applicants who are convicted of a criminal offence between applying for a place and enrolling on their programme must inform the University immediately. The conviction will be considered through the process described above.
39. Programmes that involve direct contact with children or vulnerable adults will require applicants to undergo a CRB check prior to the start of the course. Students may be asked to withdraw from the course if they are found to have a criminal record which was not previously declared at the point of application. Under these circumstances the student will be subject to the same procedure outlined above.

40. The University reserves the right to withdraw any offer of admission to an applicant, or to terminate the enrolment of a student who is found to have failed to declare a criminal conviction in accordance with paragraphs 31 and/or 38 above.

APPLICATIONS

41. All applications for entry onto full-time undergraduate courses must be submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Part-time undergraduate, part-time postgraduate and full-time postgraduate applications should be submitted using the University's application form, available on the University's website and from the Admissions Office.
42. Undergraduate applicants who have received an offer will be able to view the decision on-line using UCAS Track in the first instance. The University will send a letter to all undergraduate and postgraduate applicants confirming this offer.
43. If applicants are unsuccessful in their original application, the University may decide to make an offer on an alternative course. Once approval has been sought from the applicant, the change of offer will be communicated via UCAS (for full-time undergraduate applicants only) and in writing by the University.
44. Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place on the course are entitled to feedback. Undergraduate applicants who are unsuccessful, will be able to view the reason for rejection on UCAS Track. All other requests should be made within 14 days of receiving the University's decision, in writing, either by email or letter and be addressed to: The Admissions Manager, Registry, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln LN6 7TS.
45. All unsuccessful applications will be reviewed by the Decisions Review Panel, which will ensure consistency amongst decisions and that appropriate feedback has been provided. This Panel will consist of at least three members convened by the University Registrar (or nominee).

SELECTION AND INTERVIEWS

46. Interviews are not a pre-requisite for admission to the majority of undergraduate courses. However, some departments may request an interview, particularly in the subjects of art and design, health and social care and biological sciences. The University will contact applicants who are required to attend an interview.
47. The interview process and outcomes are recorded systematically.

CONFIRMATION

48. Confirmation is the process by which universities receive copies of examination results. If an applicant achieves the requirements of their conditional offer, their place will be confirmed. Applicants who have not met the entry requirements will be reviewed on a case by case basis by Admissions Tutors. Examination results, the interview (if appropriate) and any other relevant factors will be taken into account. In some cases, the University may decide to make an offer on an alternative course. The approval of the applicant will be sought, prior to any change.
49. The University will notify successful applicants by letter confirming their place and will include details concerning induction and enrolment.

ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

50. The University always seeks to process applications carefully, and to assess each application fairly and equally, but it recognises that some applicants might be dissatisfied either about the way in which their application was processed, or about a decision not to be offered a place.
51. Applicants who believe their application has not been handled appropriately through the admissions process should, in the first instance, write to: The Admissions Manager, Registry, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln, LN6 7TS.
52. Thereafter, if applicants remain dissatisfied with the way in which their application has been considered, they should write to: The University Secretary, Secretariat and Legal Services, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln, LN6 7TS, who will arrange for a senior member of staff from outside Registry to review the issues raised by the applicant.
53. The procedures in paragraphs 50 – 52 above shall not apply in cases where the University has declined to offer a place to an applicant on the grounds that s/he has failed to meet the stipulated minimum entry requirements for the programme; or because the programme is already fully subscribed.

REVIEW OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

54. The University recognises its responsibilities to keep its admissions policies and procedures under continuous review.

MISREPRESENTATION AND PLAGIARISM

- 55 An individual seeking admission to a programme of study provided at the University shall act in good faith and disclose any fact that is material to the University's decision to admit the individual as a student. An applicant shall not mislead the University, or allow the University to be misled in respect of any part of his or her application for admission.
56. The University reserves the right to reject an application and/or withdraw any offer and/or retrospectively terminate a student's enrolment if it is found that his/her application contained false or misleading information.
57. All personal statements, supporting applications to higher education processed through UCAS, are checked with a specially developed version of a similarity detection system. UCAS notifies both the applicant and the University in all cases of potential plagiarism. The University will review each case and where appropriate, request the applicant to re-submit a new personal statement. The University reserves the right to reject an application on the basis of plagiarism.

THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS. PLEASE CONTACT DART, STUDENT SERVICES, BRAYFORD POOL, LINCOLN, LN6 7TS, FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

GLOSSARY

A Level – Advanced level study

AS Level - Advanced Subsidiary level (first part of the Advanced level qualification)

CBT – Computer Based Test

CRB - Criminal Records Bureau

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education

HNC – Higher National Certificate

HND – Higher National Diploma

IBT – Internet Based Test

IELTS - International English Language Testing System

MA – Master of Arts

MRes – Master of Research

MSc – Master of Science

MPhil – Master of Philosophy

PhD – Doctor of Philosophy

TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language

UCAS – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

VCE – Vocational Certificate of Education