

ADMISSIONS POLICY

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Policy Statement

The Admissions Policy (the *Policy*) provides the basis for admissions practice across the University. The good practice principles and ethos identified in this document apply equally to all categories of applicants who submit an application to study at the University, though the University recognises that, for particular study opportunities, some aspects of the detailed guidance may not be relevant to an individual application.

Responsibility for compliance with the Admissions Policy lies with any member of staff who has a role to play in the admittance of students into the institution. All staff with admissions responsibility must be familiar with the Policy and that staff will be provided with the appropriate guidance, training and support.

Definitions

- i. An **applicant** is defined as someone who has submitted an application for a specific course to the University and has yet to complete their enrolment on that course. This is regardless of any other status they may hold within the University in relation to other courses.
- ii. A **programme** or **programme of study** is any learning undertaken at the university
- iii. A **course** is a specific programme of study which results in a defined award at the end.

Admissions Policy

1.1. Principles

- 1.1.1. This policy lays out Sheffield Hallam University's (*the University*) position on key matters relating to recruitment and admission. Except where explicitly stated otherwise, it applies to all applications both full time and part time to all of our undergraduate, postgraduate (taught) and postgraduate (research) programmes. This includes qualifications at certificate, diploma and degree level and individual modules.
- 1.1.2. This policy is underpinned by our institutional strategic priorities, which are articulated through our strategic plan.
- 1.1.3. The University welcomes applications from candidates from all backgrounds. We recognise that student potential is not always evident simply through formal academic qualifications and we particularly welcome applications from those who are currently under-represented within higher education.
- 1.1.4. **Equity** - The University is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all our students. We recognise that the University community is enriched by a diverse student body. No potential student will be excluded from entry to any University programme as a result of discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, disability, nationality, ethnic or national origin, race, religion or belief, or pregnancy or maternity status.
- 1.1.5. **Responsible Recruitment** - Based on the evidence provided and within the limitations of the number of available places the University will use all reasonable efforts to attempt to match applicants' aspirations to a course for which they are academically prepared and we believe have the ability to achieve success.
- 1.1.6. **Inclusivity** - The University is committed to diversity in the student population and will make available a range of measures by which applicants may demonstrate their readiness and commitment to study in higher education.
- 1.1.7. **Transparency** - The University will be open and accessible in its requirements and selection processes. Each applicant will be entitled to a prompt and professional assessment of their application against clearly available criteria, and complaints and appeals will be handled through an independent process.
- 1.1.8. The Admissions Policy aims to be fair to all applicants and to meet the legal obligations applied through relevant legislation and University policies.

2. Admissions criteria

2.1. Entry Requirements

- 2.1.1. The University requires all students entering the University for an Undergraduate Programme to meet its minimum entry requirements however, in some cases the University may choose to waive the minimum requirements and make (an) unconditional offer(s) to applicant(s). In such instances an unconditional offer will only be made to those applicants those who evidence their suitability/preparedness for the course through an alternative method of assessment such as an interview or portfolio'.
- 2.1.2. The University defines its minimum entry levels through the '*Minimum Entry Requirements*' policy, this will include requirements at both level 3 (A Levels and equivalent) and Level 2 (GCSE and equivalent) for undergraduate study, and at level 6 (degree) and level 7 (masters) for postgraduate study.
- 2.1.3. Individual programmes of study may specify entry requirements in addition to this minimum requirement and include subject specific elements. These are established in accordance with any individual programme requirements.

- 2.1.4. Typical entry grades and subject requirements are notified in the prospectus (online and physical) and in other forms of literature.
- 2.1.5. Individual programmes reserve the right to judge the relevance and acceptability of any qualification or individual subject when considering an application.
- 2.1.6. There is no University wide policy of not considering achievement in any specific A level or GCSE (or equivalent) subject and the University does not therefore maintain a list of approved and non-approved subjects.
- 2.1.7. Individual programmes may wish to discount achievement in a specific subject such as General Studies, this would be declared on the relevant section of their webpage.
- 2.1.8. Teaching, assessment and student support will normally take place in English, unless otherwise stated. The University must therefore be confident that an applicant has proficiency in the English language necessary to succeed in their chosen programme. Therefore, applicants may be required to take an English language test as part of the conditions of an offer or to successfully complete a course of English language study at the University before beginning their chosen course.
- 2.1.9. All applicants will be required to present original certification of their qualifications upon request. Applicants who fail to do this may have their applications terminated.
- 2.1.10. The University reserves the right to request further information in relation to an application either directly from an applicant or from a former place of education or referee whose details have been provided by the applicant.
- 2.1.11. An applicant may be asked to attend an interview or an audition.
- 2.1.12. All undergraduate applicants who are not interviewed but who receive an offer of a place will be offered the opportunity to visit the University in the context of a physical or virtual visit day. Other applicants may choose to visit the university independently or through other facilitated or non-facilitated events.
- 2.1.13. All applications will be considered with due regard to currently implemented University policies and external legislative frameworks as necessary.

2.2. International Requirements

- 2.2.1. Those applicants offering non-UK qualifications will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the quoted minimum entrance requirements for their programme to enrol.
- 2.2.2. Where qualifications are presented in a language other than English, an official translation may be requested at the applicant's expense.
- 2.2.3. International applicants must be proficient in English to be admitted directly onto a course. The University will normally only accept English language evidence as per our English language entry requirements | Sheffield Hallam University (shu.ac.uk) website, individual course requirements can be found on the relevant course pages in the online prospectus.
- 2.2.4. International applicants who require a Student Route Visa to study will normally be required to pay a deposit before a Certification of Acceptance to Study (CAS) will be issued. For those undertaking a pre-sessional course full payment of fees for this will be liable along with the deposit requirement before a CAS will be issued. Further information on deposit requirements are published in our website - Paying for your course | Sheffield Hallam University (shu.ac.uk)
- 2.2.5. Deposits will normally only be refunded where evidence has been provided from the UKVI of a visa refusal or exceptionally where evidence of extenuating circumstances is provided. Further information can be found in the *University's Terms and Conditions*

2.3. Non-Academic Entry Requirements

- 2.3.1. Entry to some programmes of study requires students to meet non-academic conditions. These are usually a deposit, criminal records check and health checks and any professional registration as required by certain professional programmes. Where such entry requirements are routine, they will be specified in course literature.
- 2.3.2. Such conditions must be fulfilled before entry to the programme of study, unless an exceptional later deadline to meet the conditions has been agreed Applications from candidates with criminal convictions will be carefully considered. Applicants must, upon request, provide full details of any convictions which are not 'protected' under the amendments of the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013)
- 2.3.3. The University retains the right to refuse entry to any applicant with a criminal conviction which may jeopardise the security, safety or reputation of the University or its community, or where there are relevant professional criteria which apply.
- 2.3.4. Applicants who are enrolled on a programme with outstanding non-academic entry requirements will be subject to a review and subsequent action should they fail to complete or pass the requirement within the specified timeframe.

- 2.3.5. Occasionally the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies may change at short notice to reflect government policy or changes in legislation. The University undertakes to notify all affected applicants promptly in writing of such changes.
- 2.3.6. Where an applicant is unable to satisfy the requirements of the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies despite submitting an otherwise strong application this will provide legitimate grounds for the University to reject an application.
- 2.3.7. We recognise that occasionally a programme's standard procedure for assessing applications will not provide the admissions' staff with an accurate understanding of an applicant's suitability. In such cases we may ask applicants to provide us with alternative evidence to support their application. This would be assessed on an application-by-application basis.

2.4. References

- 2.4.1. Applicants may be required to provide a reference(s) on submission of their application. The reference(s) may be used as part of the decision-making process when assessing the application. The reference(s) should normally be associated with the most recent period of study or alternatively from an individual who in a professional capacity such as from experiences as a volunteer or from paid employment if there is no period of study within the last two years. The referee should be able to comment on previous study or work experience and suitability for the course applied for.
- 2.4.2. References from those who can only comment in a personal capacity such as friends and family members are not acceptable.

2.5. Entry for Candidates with disabilities or specific learning difficulties

- 2.5.1. The University has a long tradition of working to provide an inclusive and accessible environment that welcomes, nurtures and supports students to reach their full potential.
- 2.5.2. Suitability for study will be assessed purely on academic grounds however, applicants are advised to indicate additional requirements on their application forms and are encouraged to seek advice on the suitability of the course, university accommodation and other matters prior to making an application.
- 2.5.3. The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to reject an applicant because of disability. There are however three instances in which a university can reject a disabled applicant if they have the entry criteria necessary, these are:
- i. overriding health and safety concerns;
 - ii. barriers resulting from competence standards;
 - iii. reasonable adjustments cannot be made
- 2.5.4. The University will be proactive in encouraging disclosure at all stages of the application process. Information will be treated in accordance with the relevant legislation
- 2.5.5. Should the University be unable to make reasonable adjusts support will be offered to find alternative provision either within the University or with an alternative provider.

2.6. Care Experienced Candidates

- 2.6.1. The University is committed to supporting candidates from diverse backgrounds applying to and studying at Sheffield Hallam University, such as candidates who have lived in care, either with foster carers or in a children's home.
- 2.6.2. The SHU Progress scheme runs to support potential applicants and applicants throughout the undergraduate application process, which includes a personal contact who will provide advice on additional support candidates may wish to access such as finance, accommodation and other support services.
- 2.6.3. Applicants are advised to indicate on their application forms and are encouraged to contact one of our named advisers at enrolment to assist in seeking advice on finance, University accommodation and other matters.

2.7. Special Entry Routes

- 2.7.1. The University may develop specific entry opportunities in partnership with schools or colleges at home or abroad with the intention of supporting the University's commitment to widening participation in higher education within the UK and increasing the number of international students within the University.

2.8. Costs and fees

- 2.8.1. Information about the financing of programmes at the University is available on our website, as well as being included in our prospectus.

- 2.8.2. International students sponsored through Student Route visas must meet UK Visas and Immigration financial requirements which include course fees and maintenance. Full details can be found on the UK Visas and Immigration website.

2.9. Fees Assessment

- 2.9.1. All applicants are required to indicate their nationality, country of birth and country of permanent residence as part of their application. In most cases the provisional residential category indicated on the application form will enable the University to make a decision on the fee status of an applicant. Applicants can be assessed as either a Home, or Overseas student for the purposes of fees
- 2.9.2. If the University considers an applicant's fee status to be unclear from the information provided in their application, the applicant will be asked to provide further information. This process will normally take place before the applicant has been academically assessed. The University reserves the right to identify an applicant as eligible to pay Overseas tuition fees at any point in the admissions process until enrolment is complete.
- 2.9.3. Applicants whose fee status is in question will be defaulted to Overseas until the outcome of the assessment is confirmed, at which point the relevant outcome will be recorded.
- 2.9.4. Disputed fee status decisions will be considered under the Appeals and Complaints Policy for Applicants.

2.10. Rejection and reasons

- 2.10.1. The University reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants who are unable to or not capable of meeting academic or non-academic entry requirements; where there is evidence that they are unable to meet the academic, professional or vocational requirements of the course or where there is a cap on recruitment numbers.
- 2.10.2. International students (who will be required to apply for a Student visa) may be rejected if they fail to meet UK Visas and Immigration statutory requirements; or where to make an offer would contravene UK Visas and Immigration Student Visa Policy Guidance.
- 2.10.3. The University is committed to providing feedback on request to applicants who have not been offered a place. Feedback is provided to enable applicants to reflect on their progress through the application process but does not constitute a reconsideration of an application or a challenge to the University's decision on an application.
- 2.10.4. Applicants requesting feedback are asked to do so promptly and must contact Admissions in writing (by email) within 28 days of the decision being made. The University aims to respond to requests for feedback within 20 working days of receipt, unless otherwise indicated.
- 2.10.5. Feedback on specific applicants will not be provided to any third party who has not been approved as a contact by the applicant.

2.11. Re-applications

- 2.11.1. The University will consider re-applications on an individual basis and reserves the right to use information from a previous application in assessing a re-application.

2.12. Deferred entry

- 2.12.1. A deferral can only be considered if it is made in writing (email); verbal requests must be followed up in writing before they will be implemented.
- 2.12.2. Applicants will usually be considered on the same basis as applicants in the year that they are applying for entry, unless there is a significant change in criteria, in which case they will be assessed against the criteria for the year they would enter.
- 2.12.3. Applicants will normally only be allowed to defer for up to two years from their proposed original start date or three intakes, whichever is the shorter.
- 2.12.4. Non postgraduate research applicants may be allowed to defer entry for up to 48 months from the point they were due to start the course, after which they must submit a new application to be considered along with the new cohort of applicants.
- 2.12.5. Postgraduate research applicants may be allowed to defer across two further entry points with in one academic year, or up to 12 months.

2.13. Re-admission of students

- 2.13.1. The University will not normally allow re-admission for students who have had their studies terminated or have left prior to the termination being finalised, where the applications is made within 24 months of the date of the termination decision, or period specified whichever is the longer.
- 2.13.2. Where a readmission is requested within the 24-month period, further consideration will not be given to the application unless suitable evidence is provided indicating an appropriate level of change and/or development since the termination.

An interview to determine suitability for re-entry must take place before an offer for re-entry within the 24-month period is made.

- 2.13.3. Applications from students who have a debt to the University will require the approval of the University Finance Directorate before the applicant may be offered a place.
- 2.13.4. Applications from students who have previously withdrawn themselves from the University or are not withdrawn but are seeking admission to the same, or any of the same, subjects previously studied at any level, will require the approval of the relevant subject area before the applicant may be offered a place.
- 2.13.5. Applicants who fail to declare their previous attendance at Sheffield Hallam University and/or who fall into any of the above categories may have their applications withdrawn.

2.14. Applicants with Criminal Convictions

- 2.14.1. Applicants and Prospective Students may be asked to declare unspent criminal convictions for particular types of offences in circumstances where there is a legal ground to ask for such a declaration. We reserve the right not to admit an applicant or prospective student where appropriate. Further information on applying with a criminal conviction can be found on the University website – [Apply with a criminal conviction | Sheffield Hallam University \(shu.ac.uk\)](https://www.shu.ac.uk/apply-with-a-criminal-conviction).

2.15. Applicants made an offer for an alternative programme

- 2.15.1. The University may decide that it is unable to offer a place on the original programme to which an applicant has applied but is able to make an offer for an alternative programme. In this situation the University will contact the applicant to inform them that they are being made an offer for an alternative programme.
- 2.15.2. Applicants who do not meet the requirements of their original offer may also be made an offer of an alternative programme. In this situation the University will process the alternative offer and applicants will have the opportunity to accept or decline this.

2.16. Entry with advanced standing

- 2.16.1. The University makes provision for entry to its programmes of study with advanced standing based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which can be either experiential or learning credit based.
- 2.16.2. Only results obtained from Sheffield Hallam University will be used to calculate degree classification.

2.17. Selection Events

- 2.17.1. Admission to some courses may require additional stages to the selection process such as interviews, auditions or the requirement of a portfolio this would be if:
 - i. it is a specific requirement of the programme of study.
 - ii. the applicant is a student not offering conventional qualifications.
 - iii. it is a requirement of an established progression route to the University.
- 2.17.2. Unfortunately, the University is unable to support attendance through reimbursement of expenses accrued through participation at an interview.
- 2.17.3. All applications will be considered equally, fairly and consistently having due regard to University policies and external legislative frameworks as necessary.
- 2.17.4. Normally applicants will be expected to attend a selection event which may be either virtual or face-to-face, students who live overseas or are unable to attend an interview in the UK will be offered, where appropriate and at the University's discretion, an alternative arrangement such as video-conferencing.
- 2.17.5. Applicants for Research degrees will be required to attend an interview as part of the application process

2.18. Selection Process

- 2.18.1. Decisions on selection of applicants where admissions decision making has been devolved will be made by designated Admissions tutor or Enrolment Adviser in consultation with Admissions where appropriate.
- 2.18.2. Decisions on selection of applicants where the function has been centralised will be made by the relevant Admissions Officer, who will liaise with the relevant Admissions tutor where appropriate.
- 2.18.3. All staff undertaking admissions decision making will be appropriately trained on a regular basis, any staff failing to undertake training will be unable to make decisions.

2.19. Re-sitting qualifications

- 2.19.1. Applicants are not usually penalised for retaking qualifications both within their standard mode of study (re-sitting A level or BTEC modules) or at a point after formal education (retaking GCSE's to increase their grade).
- 2.19.2. Any qualifications which are being retaken should be indicated in the relevant section of the application form as a qualification pending, with the original result logged under the qualifications completed section on the application form.

2.20. Offers

- 2.20.1. Offers may be made
 - i. Conditionally - this offer will require the applicant to achieve certain qualifications or meet specified non-academic conditions before entry is granted.
 - ii. Unconditionally - this will not require any academic conditions to be met, but may require other non-academic conditions to be met before entry is granted
- 2.20.2. Upon accepting an offer an applicant will be entering into a Pre-enrolment contract with the University. Applicants should refer to the Terms and Conditions for further information regarding that contract.

2.21. Visiting the University

- 2.21.1. The University encourages engagement with the campus, both physically and virtually. Where visits to the institution are possible there are annual Open days for applicants who have not yet made an application, and then tailored days or alternatively a campus tour for those who are holding an offer of a place. Where this is not possible or practical there is a full virtual offer which showcases the University's facilities, these events are designed to allow potential applicants the ability to experience the university campus prior to a decision on whether to either make an application or accept one of our offers.

2.22. Applications identified under the UCAS similarity detection service

- 2.22.1. Applicants who are identified under the UCAS similarity detection service may be contacted and may be required to provide additional information in relation to detection or a new statement.
- 2.22.2. Should an applicant fail to provide an amended statement or provide a statement which is fundamentally the same as the initial submission their application may be made unsuccessful.
- 2.22.3. The University reserves the right to reject an applicant based on information provided through the UCAS Similarity Detection Service.

2.23. Fraudulent applications

- 2.23.1. Applicants who do not abide by the rules and regulations of the University, UCAS, DfE Apply or partner organisations, or who make fraudulent applications, including non-disclosure of information relevant to the application, will have their offer of a place withdrawn.
- 2.23.2. Enrolments based on fraudulent applications will be covered under the Student Disciplinary Regulations, which may lead to the termination of a programme of study.

2.24. Minimum age on entry

- 2.24.1. The normal minimum age on entry to the university is 18. Where a course is able to admit applicants who are under the age of 18 at enrolment, applications will be considered in accordance with the University's [Admissions of Under 18s Policy](#)

2.25. Withdrawal of programmes and major changes to programmes

- 2.25.1. While the University endeavours to ensure all programmes run as advertised, there may be a need to discontinue a course with varying degrees of notice. It will however seek to minimise the level of disruption that such actions will cause, and where possible offer a suitable alternative course.
- 2.25.2. The University will inform applicants of major changes to programmes which occur after the application round begins and will advise applicants of possible courses of action should they be dissatisfied with the intended change.

2.26. Retention and Disclosure of Admissions Information

- 2.26.1. The University is mindful of the requirements of the Data Protection Act in handling admissions. Information on the University's practice in respect of retention or disclosure of information concerning admissions is set out in our [Privacy Notice for Student Applicants | Sheffield Hallam University \(shu.ac.uk\)](#)

2.27. Extenuating Circumstance

- 2.27.1. We recommend that information on extenuating circumstances that have affected or are likely to affect academic performance be included in the referee's report.

- 2.27.2. We cannot usually take into account information that is supplied after an adverse decision has been made on an application.
- 2.27.3. Where further information is supplied regarding extenuating circumstance, the letter should be from the relevant individual who can confirm the applicant's circumstances and impact on their outcomes such as a school or college, university or medical professional and addressed to the Deputy Head of Admissions
- 2.27.4. In assessing whether it is appropriate to consider an applicant's extenuating circumstances, the University has a duty to ensure that an examination board or awarding body has not already made reasonable adjustment to an applicant's results, where making further adjustment in the admissions process might lead to an applicant having an unfair advantage over other applicants.
- 2.27.5. In seeking adjustment for the impact of extenuating circumstances on academic attainment, the University will require formal, written confirmation from the awarding body/institution or the relevant examinations officer at the applicant's relevant education institutions that no request for adjustment was made when the qualification(s) were awarded or has been lodged with the awarding body in the case of pending qualifications.
- 2.27.6. There is no guarantee of amendment to an application or decision in light of extenuating circumstances, but the outcome of any decision made will be communicated to the relevant party.

2.28. Terms and Conditions

- 2.28.1. The University publishes terms and conditions applying to study at the University on our website and are provided directly to applicants.

3. Authority and responsibility

3.1. University responsibilities

- 3.1.1. Under the University's Articles of Government the Academic Board is charged with matters relating to admission to the University, and it empowers Colleges, Schools, Institutes, Departments and Directorates to implement the admissions policy. Executive committees may be established from time to time to exchange best practice and to deal with particular issues.
- 3.1.2. The University admissions process is governed by the Admissions Policy and associated policies and documents. The respective elements of the Policy represent the University's regulatory framework for admissions practice.
- 3.1.3. All University staff responsible for making admissions decisions discharge that responsibility according to the University Admissions Policy.

3.2. Applicant responsibilities

- 3.2.1. The University expects applicants to be aware of their responsibilities in support of the application and admissions process being completed successfully. Such responsibilities include amongst other things, an awareness and engagement with the relevant University regulations, requirements and procedures. In so doing they will be aware of the obligations upon them at each stage of the admissions process. This will be achieved by engagement with the general information made available and in some cases as specifically directed, by a College, Department, Directorate or relevant external body by a specific date.
- 3.2.2. To make a complaint; such processes will be undertaken in accordance with the Applicant Appeals and Complaints Policy
- 3.2.3. International applicants will ensure they are fully aware of and understand the current government policy guidance and its implications. It is the applicant's responsibility to comply with the guidance to secure a Student Visa to study in the UK.

4. Complaints Procedures

- 4.1. Complaints will be addressed under the University's Appeals and Complaints Policy

5. Framework

- 5.1. **The University has in place an appropriate and effective set of policies, processes and procedures, providing clarity to those having specific responsibility for admission to the University. These policies are available to all applicants at any stage of application, and to enquirers.**
- 5.2. **The University recognises the importance of the role of Admissions in fulfilling the University's strategic commitment to making higher education both accessible and diverse.**
 - 5.2.1. The University recognises the value of a diverse student community and is committed to widening participation to achieve this. It will, through the implementation of admissions policies, processes and procedures, seek to encourage a broad range of applicants.

- 5.3. **The University endeavours to offer appropriate information and support to both potential and actual applicants, enabling them to make informed decisions at each stage of the admissions process.**
- 5.3.1. The University will provide accurate and up-to-date information on both its academic and support services (e.g. accommodation, library and IT) and requirements (e.g. entry requirements and fees) to all enquirers and applicants at appropriate points in the admissions cycle.
- 5.3.2. The University will provide a range of opportunities to visit through onsite or virtual access visits and will also be active in external outreach through HE fairs and other visits (at home and overseas) where appropriate.
- 5.4. **The University determines entry requirements and selects students in accordance with the principles of consistency, equity, fairness, transparency and good customer service which in turn inform all admissions policies and procedures.**
- 5.4.1. Admissions staff will, on behalf of the University, review admissions criteria regularly to ensure the process of selection is in accordance with University policies and recruitment strategies.
- 5.4.2. Colleges and Admissions Tutors will determine specialist entry criteria such as interview and portfolio requirement in accordance with the needs of the course and make explicit and transparent the purpose and reason for the variation.
- 5.4.3. Admissions decisions will be communicated to applicants through UCAS/DfE Apply and directly to other applicants by email or through an online portal. An offer from the University for non UCAS courses will contain details of academic and other conditions or confirmation of a place where an applicant is pre-qualified.
- 5.4.4. Applicants will be made aware of additional requirements in relation to the University's obligations with regard to equality legislation and criminal convictions procedures.
- 5.4.5. Applicants who are rejected will be entitled to feedback on the reason for rejection. Applicants will be able to obtain feedback through the Admissions office on written request.
- 5.5. **The University ensures that all staff involved in the admissions process are informed and clear about their roles and responsibilities and have received the necessary training and staff development.**
- 5.6. **The University reviews and monitors its admissions activity annually to ensure it operates effectively and continues to develop.**

Version	1.1
Original Version Approved By and date	Academic Board, 26 April 2022
Original Version Approved By and date	Academic Board, 24 April 2024
Effective Date	1 September 2022
Owner	Admissions, Student Recruitment and Admissions
Review Date	April 2025