

ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK

SECTION 4

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

This Section of the Academic Quality Handbook should be of particular interest to prospective students and to staff involved in student recruitment and admissions

CONTENTS

| | | |
|------------|--|----------|
| 4.1 | Recruitment and Admissions - An Overview | 2 |
| 4.2 | Exemptions, Recognitions, Credit Transfer, APL and APEL | 2 |
| 4.3 | Student Recruitment and Admissions Service | 4 |
| 4.4 | Undergraduate Admissions | 5 |
| 4.5 | Postgraduate Admissions | 5 |

Appendix

Appendix 4.1 Admissions Policy

4.1 Recruitment and Admissions - An Overview

- 4.1.1 Undergraduate admissions and admissions to pre-service programmes in Education are administered by the Head of Admissions and a small team of Admissions Selectors, some of whom are designated Directors of Studies (Admissions). They recommend minimum entry requirements for entry and make admissions offers.
- 4.1.2 Admissions to award-bearing in-service programmes in Education (including BA programmes in the field of Professional Studies in Education and a range of postgraduate awards) are processed by staff in the School of Education.
- 4.1.3 **Admissions Selectors and Directors of Studies (Admissions)** are appointed by the University Court on the recommendation of the relevant Heads of College after appropriate consultation and, in the case of Admissions Selectors, on the nomination of the Advisory Group on Student Recruitment and Admissions (AGSRA). Admissions Selectors are appointed at undergraduate level to consider applications and make offers on behalf of the University for admission to the degrees that they are assigned. Directors of Studies (Admissions) are appointed in some areas to oversee the work of the Admissions Selectors for the degrees assigned to an Area of Study.
- 4.1.4 Although the selection of Postgraduate students is a Graduate School responsibility, they are admitted by the Head of Admissions and a team of Admissions Officers who consider School recommendations to safeguard the quality and standards laid down by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning.
- 4.1.5 The Head of Admissions and team of Admissions Selectors meet regularly to inform discussion on key issues and to ensure that all are kept up-to-date.
- 4.1.6 Admissions Selectors and Admissions Officers work closely with the Head of Admissions (Student Recruitment and Admissions Service).
- 4.1.7 Admission to the University is in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy (Appendix 4.1) and associated Guidance Notes. Further details of the admissions processes are given below.
- 4.1.8 The University Committee on Teaching and Learning is responsible, on behalf of the Senate, for oversight of issues relating to academic standards in admissions and the setting of going rates. The Operating Board also receives regular updates in regard to the University's performance in student recruitment.
- 4.1.9 Student Recruitment and Admissions Service has overall responsibility for the admissions related requirements of the Points Based Immigration System (Tier 4), to ensure compliance with UK Government regulations. Any guidance to applicants relating to immigration must either be issued directly by SRAS or have been approved by SRAS.

4.2 Exemptions, Recognitions, Credit Transfer, APL and APEL

- 4.2.1 It is the policy of the University, wherever appropriate, to give students recognition for previous studies undertaken in Higher or Advanced Further Education. In appropriate cases students may also be exempted from part of their degree programme on the basis of qualifications obtained before entry. In particular, in Arts & Social Sciences, Science and Engineering students may gain exemption from all or part of their first year undergraduate programme on the basis of good passes at GCE Advanced level or Advanced Highers, and

thereby shorten their period of study; while in Divinity and Law there are accelerated programmes for graduate entrants. Additionally, there are formal articulation arrangements with Further Education colleges, which permit entry with advanced standing to specified degree programmes following successful completion of a Higher National programme [[Section 10, sub-section 10.4 refers](#)]. Admissions Selectors have delegated authority to accredit prior learning (APL) or prior experiential learning (APEL) for individual applicants.

4.2.2 Exemptions and Recognitions are defined in General Regulation 1 for First Degrees as follows:-

Exemption: For the purposes of General Regulation 14¹, a concession made on the basis of successful completion of previous study which exempts candidates from attendance on and/or assessment in a specific course or courses, or from the requirement to obtain a specified number of credits, but which of itself has no credit value.

Recognition: For the purposes of General Regulation 14¹, the acceptance of successful completion of previous study as equivalent to the award of credit for a named course or courses, or to the award of unnamed credit of a specified value.

4.2.3 Exemptions and Recognitions can be either in terms of named courses or a specified number of credits. In either case, the extent of any recognition or exemption will depend on individual circumstances and on the qualification to which a student wishes to proceed. Thus, while all of a student's previous HE study may be recognised as having a 'general credit' value, only part may be recognised as having a 'specific credit' value in terms of the student's study aim. There are restrictions also on the extent to which a student may count passes towards more than one award at degree level. These effectively require that to obtain a second First Degree will require a minimum of two years of full-time study or the equivalent.

4.2.4 For those who do not complete their degree studies, but have completed the equivalent of either one or two years study at Aberdeen, the University awards an Undergraduate Certificate and Undergraduate Diploma in Higher Education, respectively. Such an award does not prevent a student from subsequently returning to study.

4.2.5 The University supports the UK Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS), and was a signatory to the agreement that established its Scottish variant, SCOTCAT. All awards offered by the University comply with *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland*, which has been developed as part of the wider Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The University has also credit-rated its courses in terms of the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS), and has a reciprocal agreement with the UK Open University.

4.2.6 Transfer at postgraduate level is less common than at undergraduate level, but appropriate recognition can, where appropriate, be given to studies previously undertaken elsewhere on the same topic.

¹ General Regulation 14 states that "The Senatus Academicus, on the recommendation of the Academic Standards Committee (Undergraduate), may recognise, as qualifying for a degree of the University of Aberdeen, or as exempting from the requirements of a degree, attendance on and/or examination passes in courses obtained through study for a previous degree or other qualification provided that candidates shall not be admitted to a degree of the University of Aberdeen unless they have attended qualifying courses therein during at least one session.

4.3 Student Recruitment and Admissions Service

- 4.3.1 The remit of Student Recruitment and Admissions Service (SRAS), part of the Directorate of Student Life, is to increase the number, quality and diversity of applications at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and provide advice, information and services to prospective students, their parents, careers advisers, teachers and University staff.
- 4.3.2 Student Recruitment and Admissions Service has responsibility for recruitment, international office (including Erasmus and International Exchange), and admissions, to create a framework for a more targeted and effective recruitment operation. The commissioning of research on the decision-making process of prospective students and closer interaction with Schools to create portfolios of activity focused on discipline-based needs have both formed a more confident and effective marketing recruitment strategy.
- 4.3.3 SRAS aims to provide detailed marketing information to Schools, with the assignment of a member of SRAS staff to each recruitment area of the University. Strategy documents exist for both Home-EU and overseas recruitment at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Customer relationship management is a key function of SRAS, and through a sophisticated CRM system, and via the harnessing of Web 2.0, regular, targeted communications are sent throughout the application cycle to prospective students, applicants and influencers. Virtual Open Days also ensure that all prospective students are given the opportunity to gain a sense of what study in Aberdeen will be like.
- 4.3.4 Country specific plans are produced for markets overseas, and involve the management of agent networks as well as coordinated in-country missions with academics across each College.
- 4.3.5 Targets for postgraduate recruitment and admissions are developed in tandem with the three Graduate Schools.
- 4.3.6 The Service jointly administers with the Development Trust Undergraduate Entrance Scholarships. Members of its staff act as Selectors for the admission of non-graduating North American students, including those coming through the University's Exchange programmes. Outgoing Exchange students are also selected, briefed and placed in suitable universities and colleges in North America and Hong Kong.
- 4.3.7 Other objectives include encouraging pupils from widening access schools to contemplate university study. This is done through the Service's Aim 4 Uni programme, which also assists schools with their S6 Advanced Higher syllabus through the offering of on-campus workshops and events for pupils. The Service also undertakes valuable market research for the University to ensure our product portfolio continues to meet the demand of customers. From 2013, SRAS has also taken on responsibility for coordination of the University's Summer School for Access. Work is also carried out with other areas of the University, most notably Alumni Relations and Communications.
- 4.3.8 Full details regarding SRAS can be found at www.abdn.ac.uk/study/index.php.

4.4 Undergraduate Admissions

- 4.4.1 The Admissions Programme of SRAS provides a centrally based service for undergraduate admissions. It deals with approximately 20,000 applications for undergraduate degrees including part-time and transfer applications; it makes about 9,000 offers and admits in the region of 2,500 new students each year.
- 4.4.2 The University admits to degree area, and not to Schools or Colleges. The general pattern is that there is one Selector for each degree area and each has executive powers to act on behalf of the University. In Arts & Social Sciences, Science, Engineering and Medicine, the principal selectors are the Directors of Studies (Admissions).
- 4.4.3 Admissions Selectors are line-managed by the Senior Vice-Principal and with the Head of Admissions carry responsibility for achieving the targets for home, RUK and overseas admissions which are set by the University on an annual basis. Their workloads, and that of the admissions staff, follow the annual UCAS admissions cycle, and involves assessing the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) applications, making offers, interviewing applicants (in some areas) and providing detailed information for applicants to ensure they are able to make an informed choice of degree/university. Indeed, there is an all-year-round demand for information made by potential applicants, their teachers and parents, students who wish to transfer course or university, and part-time students.
- 4.4.4 The first UCAS applications for the following year arrive at about the same time as the students from the last cycle enter the University i.e. in September/October, although the numbers do not build up substantially until November.
- 4.4.5 The bulk of the UCAS applications arrive in November, December and January, with decisions on each having to be by set UCAS deadlines, the first one being 31 March. . During March/April a number of Schools/Degree Programmes hold applicant visit days and SRAS hold other events such as Parents Information Evenings across Scotland and the UK. Numbers are monitored closely by the Head of Admissions and Selectors. The most intensive period of activity is in August when the Higher and A-level results are released, and continues until the start of term with applicants being accepted and rejected. At this time, Clearing and Adjustment commences, when unplaced candidates seek vacancies. All accepted applicants are sent "Joining Instructions" and detailed information on the registration process and courses available for the start of the academic year. International student may also be sent additional information that enables them to apply for a Tier 4 visa.
- 4.4.6 SRAS is also the starting point of each undergraduate student's computerised record. In addition to working with Registry staff, the Admissions team liaises closely with other administrative areas, since a number of students enter through various access routes.

4.5 Postgraduate Admissions

- 4.5.1 The Student Recruitment and Admissions Service deals with the administrative procedures concerning all stages of a postgraduate student's admission and is a point of contact for prospective student enquiries. It deals with a wide diversity of general enquiries for information on postgraduate programmes, funding, university facilities, etc.
- 4.5.2 A potential student applies online. The application is then directed to the relevant School, which is responsible for assessing the application on academic grounds. Recommendations for admission, approved by a nominated academic, are forwarded to the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service so that the formal decision can be communicated to

the applicant. Upwards of 11,000 applications are handled each year by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service.

4.5.3 Before an applicant can be cleared for admission, it is required that:-

- all academic conditions (if any), including evidence of English proficiency where applicable, have been fulfilled;
- an acceptance form has been signed;
- a financial guarantee form has been signed and returned with evidence of sponsorship if applicable;
- any deposit, where applicable, has been paid and the deposit agreement form has been signed.

4.5.4 Applicants cleared for admission are sent “Joining Instructions” which include information on registration and on obtaining accommodation. International student may also be sent additional information that enables them to apply for a Tier 4 visa.

4.5.5 Applicants can submit applications at any time as entry is not always restricted to the start of a new academic year. This is particularly true for research applicants who can commence studies at any point in the year with the approval of their supervisor(s).

4.5.6 The Registry deals with the administrative procedures concerning registration, progression through studies and examination results for research programmes.