

The University of Aberdeen

Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy

The University of Aberdeen has a long standing commitment to widening access to higher education. A key part of this commitment is the University's Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy.

We are keen to encourage students from the widest possible range of backgrounds to participate in University studies, and we appreciate that not all students have the same opportunity to meet our advertised entry requirements.

For this reason we take "contextualised information" into account when making decisions on the applications we have received and the exact grades we might require in any given case. Applicants who meet our criteria (please see the list below for more information) may be made an offer of admission at or below the relevant Access Threshold level.

Please note that the University can check if an applicant meets some of the criteria listed below using the information that is supplied in the UCAS form. Where possible applicants should include information about any circumstances they would like to highlight in their Personal Statement (or alternatively ask their referee to include relevant information in the Reference). If an applicant cannot include contextual information in the personal statement, they can send a separate document, which details these circumstances, to the University's Admissions Service. Any additional information, which is supplied to the University in a clear and timely manner, will be considered alongside the main application. (Applicants must include their full name and UCAS ID number in all correspondence with the University)

Please also note that the University would also ask that, where possible, referees mention and verify if an applicant meets one or more of the Widening Participation criteria in their UCAS reference.

2. Contextualised Admissions / Widening Participation Criteria

The following are some of the key Widening Participation Criteria that the University will consider when making an Adjusted or Access Threshold Offer:

- **Applicants who normally reside in a SIMD 20 Scottish postcode area.**
- **Applicants who normally reside in a SIMD 40 Scottish postcode area.**
- **Applicants who have experience of being in Care.**
- **Applicants who normally reside in a POLAR 4 Quintile 1 (Rest of UK) postcode area.**
- Applicants who have an unpaid Caring Role.
- Applicants who, as a young person, went through the Children's Panel process.
- Applicants who have regularly attended a Scottish Low Progression Secondary School.
- Applicants who are Estranged from their family.
- Applicants who identify as coming from a Gypsy, Roma or Travelling Community.
- Applicants who are in the first generation of their family to attend University.
- Applicants who have been in receipt of Free School Meals.

- Applicants who have been in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance.
- Applicants who have experienced a mental health issue that has impacted on their education in the senior phase (or throughout the majority of their secondary education).
- Applicants who have experienced a physical health issue that has impacted on their education in the senior phase (or throughout the majority of their secondary education).
- Applicants whose home address (in Scotland) is in an area that is considered to be (4) Remote Small Town, (5) Very Remote Small Town, (7) Remote Rural, (8) Very Remote Rural as classified by the Scottish Government 8 fold Urban Rural Classification.
- Applicants who have been granted Refugee / Asylum status (and meet the eligibility criteria for Home Fees (Scottish / EU)).
- Applicants who have been granted Refugee / Asylum status (and meet the eligibility criteria for Rest of UK fees.)
- Applicants whose parent(s) have had a custodial sentence.
- Applicants who have parents in British Military Service.
- Applicants who have been in British Military Service (Veterans/ Early Service Leavers).
- Applicants who meet one or more other Widening Participation criteria.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and the University may consider other criteria under its contextualised admissions policy.

To check if you meet one or more of these criteria please see the following webpage:
abdn.ac.uk/contextual-admissions

Where possible the University would ask that referees mention and verify if an applicant meets one or more of the criteria listed above in their UCAS reference.

These targets are agreed in the University's Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council. They are also in line with the Scottish Government's national ambitions as detailed in the Commission for Widening Access Report. (<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/access-inclusion/commission-widening-access/commission-widening-access.aspx>)

For more information on applicants who hold a criminal conviction please see the latest version of the Guidance Notes on Admissions for Undergraduate, Primary and Secondary Teaching Training (PGDE) please see the following webpage:
<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy.php>

3. Care Experienced Applicants:

Care Experienced applicants will be made a conditional offer of admission by the University if they meet the relevant entry requirement for any of its non-controlled subjects.

For subjects or programmes where more than the standard UCAS application is required other requirements must be met by the applicant (BMus, BMus Education, MBChB and MA Education).

The University's ambition is to guarantee interviews for Care Experienced applicants (Applicable for the MBChB, BMus Education, BMus and MA Education programmes).

Please see the University Widening Participation webpages for more information:
<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/widening-access.php>

4. Access Thresholds / Non-controlled subjects

The University of Aberdeen may make an offer of admission at its Adjusted or Access threshold level if an applicant meets one or more Widening Participation criteria.

Please note that not all of the University's non-controlled subjects have an Adjusted or Access Threshold entry requirement level. These particular programmes are as follows:

MEng, BSc Biomedical Sciences, MChem, MGeol, MPhys, MSci (Computing Science), MSci (Biological Sciences) and MSci (Medical Sciences).

Candidates who perform well during the 1st year of their studies may be able to apply to move onto one of the (relevant) advanced courses listed above (This option is not always available on each of these courses – please contact the academic school for more information).

More detailed information on the different Access Thresholds for each of the applicable undergraduate degree programme can be found on the each of the subject pages throughout the rest of the prospectus and on the following webpage: abdn.ac.uk/contextual-admissions

5. Contextualised Admissions and controlled subjects

The University offers a range of subjects which are considered to be controlled subjects (E.g. the MA in Education). For these programmes the University cannot independently set all of the entry requirements. In light of these arrangements the University does not have full flexibility with the entry requirements for its degree programmes in Education, Music, Medicine and Graduate Dentistry. This is due to the input of external bodies like the General Teaching Council for Scotland. These agencies set standards at a national level. The University may still be able to give an adjusted offer of admission for these programmes where this is appropriate.

6. Policy Documents

Copies of the University's general Admissions and Contextualised and Access Thresholds Policies can be found at the following webpages:

www.abdn.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/admissions-policy

7. More information

For more information the University's Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy please contact the Widening Participation Unit at email: accessaberdeen@abdn.ac.uk, telephone: 01224 273107.