



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE  
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



# Admissions Policy

Incorporating procedures for Admissions and Student  
Recruitment



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## Background

- 1 The policies and procedures in this document have been written with a consideration of the current laws and regulations for higher education as set by the OFS and the Quality Assurance Agency.
- 2 Buckinghamshire New University Admissions policies and procedures have been written with full consideration of the Fair Admissions Code of Practice<sup>1</sup> and the UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.<sup>2</sup>
- 3 A commitment to providing a high-quality application experience that is fair and transparent underpins all of the institution's admissions policies and procedures and all processes are developed with applicant needs at the forefront.

## Purpose Statement

- 4 The purpose of this document is to ensure that all applicants, advisors and other interested parties have access to clear and definitive information on the process of applying to study at Buckinghamshire New University.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/uuk-guildhe-admissions-code-of-practice.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/the-quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

- 5 This document can be read before, during or after an application to Buckinghamshire New University and may be of particular use in the case of a complaint or appeal being made regarding the handling of an application or enquiry to the University.
- 6 Admissions colleagues at the University are expected to be familiar with and follow the processes mapped out in this document and it is expected that all applications to Buckinghamshire New University will be handled professionally, responsibly and in line with our stated policies and procedures.

## **Applicability and Scope**

- 7 The admissions policy and procedures within this document serve as an overarching policy for admission to all Buckinghamshire New University courses, validated partner programmes, and degree apprenticeships, including across campuses and distance learning. This ensures a consistency of approach across all programmes and levels (e.g. postgraduate and undergraduate). Where a difference in procedure exists between levels, this has been clarified.
- 8 For those validation and franchise partners whose agreements consist of the responsibility for admissions sitting with the partner, it is expected that they will deliver within the spirit of this policy and specifically adhere to such terms as outlined in their operations manual. It is not expected that fundamental policy differences will exist between Buckinghamshire New University and our academic partners and every effort is made to ensure compatibility between respective policy and procedure documents.
- 9 This policy document exists for applicants applying to the 2023/24 Academic year onwards. Applicants who applied to Buckinghamshire New University for previous intakes should refer to the Buckinghamshire New University admissions policy version which was live for that academic year.

## **Responsibilities**

- 10 The ultimate authority to offer a place on a Buckinghamshire New University programme lies with the institution. All applications and enrolments with validation partners are approved by the University in collaboration with academic partners.
- 11 Buckinghamshire New University sets all academic and non-academic entry requirements in consultation with the relevant academic team.
- 12 All applicants are expected to provide full and honest information as part of their application, documentation and any subsequent enquiries. Applicants who do not respond to enquiries or provide the specific information requests are liable to have their application rejected or withdrawn.

- 13 The responsibility for accepting applicants with “non-standard” applications (e.g. advanced entry or qualifications not normally accepted for degree level study) lies with the academic team and relevant course tutors.
- 14 The University’s Admissions Office are responsible for ensuring that all Buckinghamshire New University applicants are treated fairly and consistently, regardless of which partner institution, course or level they have applied to.
- 15 The University is committed to the training and continuing development of its employees. Employees are encouraged and supported in all areas of learning, both in relation to their development in their respective professional roles and in their individual areas of personal interest. Continual professional development (CPD) courses are provided both internally and externally and the University aims to consistently monitor and update its training methods and procedures to ensure all employees involved in the University admissions process deliver a professional and fair service.
- 16 The responsibility for ensuring the accuracy and relevance of this Admissions Policy lies with the Head of Admissions.

## Definitions

Glossary	Meaning
Academic Partner	An institution which Buckinghamshire New University works with for the delivery, validation or quality assurance of our programmes.
Admissions	The admissions department deal primarily with the assessment of applications to programmes, issuing of offers and verification of qualifications and documents. Buckinghamshire New University operates a centralised admissions process.
Buckinghamshire New University (BNU)	Is the institution and the awarding body <a href="https://bnu.ac.uk/">https://bnu.ac.uk/</a>
Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA)	The government body tasked with strengthening business competition and reducing anti-competitive practices. This body has provided guidance which higher education providers are expected to follow to ensure that students and applicants are treated fairly and lawfully. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-guide-to-consumer-rights-for-students</a>
Conditional offer	An offer in which there are specific qualifications or grades which must be achieved prior to a formal place being offered on the course. Offer conditions will be communicated by UCAS Track, email or a formal offer letter.

Contextual data	<p>Contextual data is data that gives context to a person, entity or event. It is commonly used by universities in order to determine academic potential of applicants. Contextual data is simply additional information considered by our admissions decision-makers alongside your UCAS form. We do not make decisions on the basis of this information alone.</p> <p>We use contextual information, where available. They are drawn from your UCAS application form and used alongside publicly available datasets to provide the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The postcode that you have provided as your home address, using the HESA POLAR4 Low Participation Neighbourhood.</li> <li>2. Whether you have been looked after or in care for more than three months.</li> <li>3. Whether your parents have higher education qualifications.</li> <li>4. The performance of the school or college where you took your GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.</li> <li>5. The performance of the school or college where you took your A-levels or equivalent qualifications.</li> </ol>
Entry requirements	The minimum grades, qualifications and competencies required to get a guaranteed place to study on a programme. Applicants achieving less than our standard entry requirements may still be considered on a case by case basis but it is important to remember that only meeting the requirements in full can completely guarantee that a place is reserved for you on the programme.
Firm Acceptance	In order for a place to be reserved on a programme, applicants must indicate that they would like to accept this offer as their first choice course and institution. This can be done via UCAS Track for UCAS applicants or via email for non UCAS applicants.
Insurance acceptance	Specifically for applicants applying through UCAS, in some cases applicants are given the choice by UCAS to select an Insurance offer as their second choice. In any case where an applicant is rejected from their firm choice but meets their insurance conditions they will hold a confirmed place for their insurance choice.
International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	This is Buckinghamshire New University's preferred English language test for applicants from Non-Majority English speaking countries. This assessment tests and grades the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. <a href="https://www.ielts.org/">https://www.ielts.org/</a> For international applicants requiring a Student visa this is considered to be a UKVI approved SELT. For applicants not requiring sponsorship alternatives may be considered.
Interview	Interviews may be used to give each suitable applicant the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths relative to others and allow improved differentiation between them. We may invite you to attend an interview as part of the admissions process to your chosen course. In these cases please be aware each course has specific criteria for interview, which are explained in the course profile.
Level 2 qualifications	Qualifications awarded at Level 2 are considered to be equal to a GCSE at grades A*-C, these qualifications are requested by Buckinghamshire New University in English and Maths as part of some standard entry requirements to undergraduate programmes.
Level 3 qualifications	Qualifications awarded at Level 3 are considered to be equal to A-Level standard, although smaller qualifications such as AS levels also fit into this category. Applicants to Buckinghamshire New University are expected to have studied to Level 3 prior to enrolment, however Buckinghamshire New University does not typically accept applicants who have only studied to AS level or equivalent.

The Office for Students (OFS)	The regulatory body for all English higher education.
Postgraduate	This refers to qualifications and students studying qualifications at a higher level than a degree, e.g. Masters programmes. It can also refer to higher level programmes such as PhDs.
UCAS	This organisation provides a central application service for all applicants to full time undergraduate programmes. Buckinghamshire New University is committed to recruiting all full time undergraduates through UCAS and abiding by their rules and timelines. Please see <a href="http://www.ucas.com">www.ucas.com</a> for more information. <a href="http://www.ucas.com">http://www.ucas.com</a>
UCAS Tariff Points	The UCAS tariff points system is a reference guide for applicants, advisors and admissions teams to calculate the equivalency of different grades and qualifications. This is a useful reference guide but not all acceptable qualifications are listed on the Tariff Point system. <a href="https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator">https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator</a>
Unconditional offer	An offer made in any case where the applicant has already met all formal requirements for the programme or achieved a suitable high level in exams to have their place confirmed.
Undergraduate	This refers to qualifications and students studying at degree level, e.g. BSc (Hons) and BA (hons). It can also refer to programmes at lower levels such as Foundation degrees.

## Fair and Transparent Admissions

- 17 Buckinghamshire New University has a firm and passionate commitment to encouraging all who have the ability to benefit from higher education to access it with the maximum ease and the greatest flexibility. We aim to select as participants those who will benefit the most from working with us and succeed in higher education and the careers they aspire to. These will include students with strong academic credentials and aspirations as well as those from under-represented groups, those looking for second opportunities, those already in work, and those looking to develop themselves later in life. We provide a series of alternative access routes and flexible learning paths to promote widening participation; helping learners achieve their potential goes to the heart of the University's mission and is reflected in all aspects of promotion, recruitment, admissions, on-course delivery and support and progression to further study or employment.
- 18 All applicants to Buckinghamshire New University should expect and receive fair and reasonable treatment during the application and enrolment process by all employees of the University and our partners. Decision making will be unbiased and transparent and applicants are entitled to receive detailed feedback on their application decision when requested. Feedback requests should be made direct to Buckinghamshire New University admissions ([admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk)) in writing.
- 19 Buckinghamshire New University is committed to widening participation and ensuring that all students with the potential to succeed, regardless of their background, are encouraged to apply to study with us. The additional information gained through contextual data supports our admissions teams to recognise a student's achievements and identify their potential to succeed in the context of their background and experience. Each case is considered on an individual basis and the information used is primarily drawn from your UCAS application form.
- 20 The institution recognises the authority of the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) and the guidance on consumer protection provided to higher education institutions. Buckinghamshire New University is committed to ensuring that policies and practices are in line with CMA guidance and ensuring that consumer protection rights are extended to all applicants and students.<sup>3</sup>
- 21 Where courses are recruited using UCAS, Buckinghamshire New University recognises and follows the rules set by UCAS to ensure fair admissions including the January Equal Consideration which ensures that all applicants applying before the deadline are given equal opportunity to receive an offer.
- 22 As a holder of the status as an HEI sponsor under Home Office regulation, we take the award of this status with the utmost integrity and ensure this policy is in line with UKVI

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>

## Equality and Diversity

- 23 Buckinghamshire New University is committed to promoting equality and diversity and adheres to the Equality Act 2010.<sup>5</sup>
- 24 Through both its Equality Strategy and Admissions Policy, the University is committed to providing fair, transparent and consistent practice. We work to create and maintain an inclusive environment where everyone can be themselves and achieve their full potential and we are committed to celebrating diversity and promoting equality of opportunity.
- 25 The institution does not discriminate against applicants on any characteristics such as disability, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, political beliefs or socio-economic status.
- 26 Buckinghamshire New University acknowledges the benefits that a diverse student body brings and aims to promote and encourage equality between all students and staff members.

## Applicants with Disabilities and additional support needs

- 27 Buckinghamshire New University welcomes applications from disabled students and has a dedicated team providing support, advice and guidance to applicants and students.
- 28 Applicants are encouraged to disclose the nature of their disability in their applications. <https://www.bnu.ac.uk/life/student-success-and-support/inclusion-diversity-and-disability>
- 29 This early contact with the applicant allows the University to be pro-active in discussion and provision of reasonable adjustments, so enhancing their studies and student experience, whilst complying with current government legislation.
- 30 In cases where an applicant declares a disability on their application, consideration of support requirements will remain entirely separate from entry requirements. If an offer is made, an assessment of needs is carried out separately to ensure that the University can provide the required support.
- 31 Where the needs of the applicant are complex, the University will issue an offer based on academic and other eligibility criteria, which remains subject to investigation as to whether suitable adjustments can be implemented.
- 32 Complex needs will be assessed by a panel consisting of Head of Students & Wellbeing, Head of School or Course Leader, Health & Safety Manager and Accommodation Manager as appropriate.
- 33 In the exceptional event that the University decides that the adjustments required to

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsor-a-tier-4-student-guidance-for-educators>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/legislation/equality-act-2010>

support the applicant could not reasonably be made, the University reserves the right not to make such adjustments. In such a case, the University will contact the applicant directly to confirm this decision. We will offer the applicant support in submitting an alternative application where appropriate.

## How to Apply

- 34 Buckinghamshire New University recommends all full-time undergraduate students apply through UCAS and applicants are asked in the first instance to visit [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) and submit an application to study through their online application form.
- 35 Applicants applying through Clearing who have not previously submitted an application through UCAS for that intake may be offered a place outside of the UCAS system. In such cases, the institution will provide applicant details to UCAS directly and create an application on their behalf once the applicant has formally enrolled on their programme.
- 36 Applicants applying for postgraduate study, select Foundation degrees, short courses, CPD or distance learning and part-time programmes should apply using the online application portal on the University website at <http://bnu.ac.uk/applynow>, as directed by the instructions for application on the course page of the website. Applicants are advised to follow the instructions and links to either application methods on the individual course pages.
- 37 Applicants wishing to apply for a research degree should visit our website <https://www.bnu.ac.uk/research/graduate-school>

## Criteria for Admissions and Entry Requirements

- 38 The University seeks to admit applicants it believes have the potential to succeed. Underlying this strong belief are three factors we feel are key to indicating the likely success of a student:
  - a Ability at a certain level in thinking and learning
  - b A foundation of skills from which to extend their study
  - c Motivation and commitment
- 39 These factors, alongside formal qualifications, will be assessed through a student's, application, personal statement and, where appropriate, at an audition/interview/skills test. Each application is individually assessed upon its own merits.
- 40 Entry requirements at Buckinghamshire New University are set in collaboration between the Marketing and Student Recruitment Directorate, senior management, academic partners, relevant academic colleagues and employers of degree apprentices, as appropriate.
- 41 Requirements are reviewed annually to ensure that they are reasonable, relevant and in line

with industry best practice. Any academic decision made by the Admissions Team is therefore made in accordance with these criteria. Changes to this entry criteria can only be agreed between the Head of School and the Head of Admissions.

- 42 The purpose of setting minimum academic entry requirements is to ensure that students joining Buckinghamshire New University have demonstrated sufficient academic ability to complete and gain benefit from a programme of study. It is not in the best interest of an applicant to allow them to join and commit to a programme of study and/or pay tuition fees for a programme for which they are not sufficiently prepared or where doubt exists regarding their ability to succeed on and complete the programme.
- 43 Applicants are expected to demonstrate numeracy and literacy skills equal to QCF Level 2 (GCSE A\*-C or equivalent) through formal qualifications. Applicants who do not meet these requirements will be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account their strengths in each area and the demands of their chosen programme. Applicants to specific, professional programmes may be required to undertake additional assessment to establish that an appropriate level of ability in English language and/or mathematics has been achieved. This usually takes place during specified interview days or as part of the selection process.
- 44 Suitability for entry to a higher education programme can be demonstrated in a number of ways and is not limited to academic qualifications alone. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact Admissions for advice at [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk).
- 45 Up to date entry requirements are published on the relevant page for each programme on our website, partner websites, and the UCAS course listing page (where appropriate).
- 46 Buckinghamshire New University is committed to ensuring that information provided to applicants is accurate and correct. In any case where a difference in published entry requirements exists across prospectus, leaflets and written communication to applicants, Buckinghamshire New University's website should be taken to be the most up to date and definitive source of information.
- 47 Buckinghamshire New University typically make undergraduate offers based upon the UCAS Tariff point system and undergraduate applicants are expected to hold the appropriate number of UCAS points for their chosen programme. More information on UCAS Tariff points can be found at <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator>.
- 48 A tariff points range will usually be provided and students studying a broader range of subjects should display a minimum level of achievement in each, in accordance with the published range.
- 49 Any qualification which carries tariff points may be counted towards the total, however applicants are normally expected to have at least two full A-levels or an equivalent as part of their qualification profile for entry to Level 4.
- 50 Applicants taking qualifications not currently included in the UCAS tariff should contact

Admissions for advice at [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk).

- 51 Entry to taught postgraduate programmes normally requires a first degree, but relevant experience, in some cases, can substitute for this requirement. The University does reserve the right to make this decision and entry to programmes without a first degree is at the University's discretion. Specific entry criteria can be found on the course pages of the University website ([www.bnu.ac.uk](http://www.bnu.ac.uk)).
- 52 Admission to foundation year, level 3 and further education programmes run by the University is considered in accordance with specific entry criteria for each course, which can also be found on the course page on our website.
- 53 All applicants to undergraduate and postgraduate courses, as well as some professional courses, must submit a personal statement in support of their application. This personal statement must be a piece of original writing and should demonstrate a clear interest in the subject applied for as well as strong literacy skills. Statements containing considerable inaccuracies, spelling or grammar issues, or flagged as containing duplicate sentences in the UCAS Similarity Detection Service or other, similar software, may result in an application being rejected or a new personal statement being requested.
- 54 Undergraduate applicants are expected to submit at least one reference; this should be an academic reference from a current or former tutor, however professional references can also be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Applicants currently studying for a qualification for entry to higher education (e.g. A-levels) will always be expected to submit a reference from their current school or college.
- 55 Postgraduate applicants are expected to submit one reference, either professional or academic. Applicants unable to submit one reference should seek further advice from Admissions.
- 56 Buckinghamshire New University routinely check references for validity and referees may be contacted to request further information or clarification. References found to be falsified or from unsuitable sources may result in an application being unsuccessful.
- 57 It is the responsibility of all applicants to supply accurate information at the time of application and to disclose anything which may influence an admission decision. Failure to disclose information which would have been influential in the decision-making process, may lead to an offer being retracted.
- 58 In applicable cases, applicants who are not successful for select taught three-year programmes may be offered relevant Foundation level study, or alternative but related undergraduate courses that have a lower academic entry profile.



## **Evidence of Qualifications and Information Verification**

- 59 Buckinghamshire New University reserve the right to request evidence of any qualification stated on an application form.
- 60 Applicants who fail to provide evidence of qualifications to Buckinghamshire New University within 28 days of the initial request may have their application rejected or withdrawn.
- 61 As part of the application assessment process, information provided by an applicant may be verified for accuracy by Buckinghamshire New University or authorised colleagues at our partner institutions. This includes qualifications, references and previous study.
- 62 Buckinghamshire New University reserve the right to withdraw or reject any application found to contain misleading or false information. This information may also be shared with the UCAS verification team for further investigation and may result in other UCAS choices being contacted or the UCAS application being withdrawn entirely.
- 63 All applicants are expected to have provided evidence of qualifications prior to enrolment. Students with outstanding evidence or qualifications may be provisionally permitted to attend lectures, log in to student accounts (e.g. email or Blackboard) and make use Buckinghamshire New University facilities such as the library whilst certificates or results are pending, however this is strictly at the discretion of the University and will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- 64 Any applications found to contain deliberately misleading or fraudulent information by the University, identified through the UCAS Similarity Detection Service, or found to be fraudulently claiming extenuating circumstances, will be rejected by the University.

## English Language

- 65 All Buckinghamshire New University programmes are taught in English and applicants must have demonstrated sufficient English language ability to be able to succeed prior to enrolment on a programme. This is typically evidenced through completion of a GCSE, level 2 or equivalent programme from a majority English speaking country.
- 66 Any student who has studied in a non-majority English speaking country will typically be asked to complete an additional qualification testing English language ability (speaking, listening, reading & writing). Buckinghamshire New University's preferred qualification is IELTS but equivalent qualifications can be considered. Please contact [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk) should further advice on suitable English language qualifications be required.
- 67 Applicants who have previously studied English as a second language (in which the primary mode of instruction is in a different language) may still be asked to provide evidence of English ability as part of their offer conditions. The institution consults ECCTIS for guidance on qualifications in this category.
- 68 Buckinghamshire New University may be unable to accept certain qualifications or tests with known security or verification issues. Applicants wishing to submit an English qualification not listed on the University website should contact Admissions for advice.

## Predicted Grades and Conditional Offers

- 69 Buckinghamshire New University will make use of conditional offers for any applicant sitting entry qualifications (e.g. A-Levels, BTEC qualifications, GCSEs) who have yet to complete the final assessment. A conditional offer will be made in any case where a suitable personal statement and reference has been submitted and the applicant is currently sitting or holding sufficient qualifications to meet our minimum grade and UCAS point requirements.
- 70 Predicted grades are considered to be a useful indicator of a student's current academic ability, however it is recognised that making a decision based upon predicted grades alone may not always result in a fair or accurate decision. In many cases an offer will be made to any applicant meeting the entry criteria, including cases where the predicted grades are lower than our entry requirements. The decision to make an offer to applicant with lower predicted grades would typically be made on the basis of a strong application, reference and personal statement.
- 71 Applicants who do not have suitable Level 2 qualifications in Maths and English may be issued a conditional offer on the basis of achieving this qualification, even if they are not currently sitting it. This is to ensure that we give applicants every possible opportunity to succeed in gaining a place. Applicants unsure as to how to meet this condition should

contact Admissions for advice on [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk).

- 72 Applicants receiving a conditional offer are expected to meet all conditions by the following 1 September (or later deadline if set by UCAS) and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that Buckinghamshire New University is provided with suitable evidence that all conditions have been met prior to this deadline. Extensions to this deadline are at the discretion of the University.

## Unconditional Offers

- 73 Buckinghamshire New University will make Unconditional Offers when the applicant:
- already holds the required grades or qualifications for the course
  - applies to a course where admissions decisions have been substantively informed by an interview, audition, or additional application procedures (such as the submission of a portfolio or skills test)
  - requires special consideration due to mitigating circumstances, such as illness or disability.
- 74 Buckinghamshire New University will not use conditional unconditional offers or incentives that put undue pressure on the applicant to make the University the applicant's Firm Choice.

## Contextual Admissions

- 75 Buckinghamshire New University uses contextual information to assist in making assessments on an applicant's potential. Adjustments may be made to the requested tariff criteria in conditional offers or Unconditional offers made where appropriate.



## Interviews

- 76 For some provision, e.g. Performing Arts, Nursing and Professional Social Work courses, applicants will be required to audition or attend an interview, during which, written assessments in literacy and numeracy may be required. Where an applicant is interviewed or auditioned the decision for admission will be made by the academic or sector professional conducting the Interview.

## Student Transfer (Advanced Entry and Credit Exemption)

- 77 Buckinghamshire New University will consider applications from students wishing to transfer to the University. Applications should be submitted using the most appropriate route and will be assessed against the entry criteria and requirements for the course of study.
- 78 Buckinghamshire New University is willing to consider applications for advanced entry onto a degree programme for applicants who have already completed Level 4 or 5 of a degree elsewhere. A thorough investigation of previous subjects studied and grades attained must take place prior to confirmation of an offer and acceptance cannot be guaranteed.
- 79 The University operates processes in relation to the Accreditation of Prior Learning, which are aligned to sector practice. Experiential industry experience, or credits accumulated from a programme at another educational organisation may, where appropriate, allow applicants to transfer credits towards a degree programme at Buckinghamshire New University. In these cases, credits may be counted, but marks achieved elsewhere are not carried forward.
- 80 Specific professional programmes may have additional criteria, or limits to what proportion of the programme can be transferred.
- 81 Applicants seeking to transfer should contact Admissions for advice.

## Unsuccessful Applicants

- 82 In cases where an applicant is unsuccessful in their application, the admissions team can provide detailed and personalised guidance on improving their profile and reapplying successfully in a future intake, along with feedback regarding the reasons for rejection.
- 83 Feedback is not provided as standard following an unsuccessful decision, however all applicants are entitled to request and receive feedback. This will be provided in writing within 15 working days of the request. Feedback should be requested by emailing [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk).

## Alternative Offers

- 84 In cases where an applicant does not meet the minimum requirements for a course, they may be considered for an alternative programme at Buckinghamshire New University. This will happen in any case where the applicant meets the requirement for this alternative programme and the University deem that the programme is relevant or of interest.

## Decision process

- 85 The University operates a centralised admissions service for these programmes and decisions are made by a professional team in the Marketing and Student Recruitment Directorate. This team is highly experienced and qualified to make these decisions, ensuring that it is able to deliver a fair and consistent admissions service.
- 86 Where the Admissions Team may need to seek further advice, appropriate admissions tutors, or Heads of School may be consulted on an admissions decisions. Such occasions may be when an applicant possesses non-standard qualifications.
- 87 Should any information be unclear on completed application forms, the Admissions Team will seek clarification directly from the applicant. This will, naturally, delay a final decision being made.



## Communications

- 88 Applicants may be contacted by Buckinghamshire New University or authorised colleagues at our academic partners in cases where information is missing or unclear which prevents a decision being made on an application. Applicants will typically be contacted by email.
- 89 In any case where an applicant does not respond to an information request, the application will be put on hold for a maximum of 28 days or until the passing of deadlines set by

- UCAS, or the University for the desired intake.
- 90 Buckinghamshire New University will reply to applicants within the stated service level agreement in initial communications and will process applications in line with stated guidelines from UCAS and/ or detailed in partner Operation Manuals.
  - 91 Applicants who do not respond by the given deadline will be contacted again and given an additional 14 days to respond.
  - 92 Buckinghamshire New University reserve the right to reject or withdraw any applicant who submits an incomplete or unclear application and who do not respond satisfactorily to requests for more information or clarification.
  - 93 Applicants applying through UCAS will receive their decision and any offer conditions through UCAS Track.
  - 94 Direct applicants will receive their decision via an offer letter which will be emailed to them.

## **Confirmation of results**

- 95 The confirmation of offers occurs when results are received by the Admissions Team.
- 96 The process involves the comparison of achieved results against the original offer made by the University. If academic conditions, alongside any non-academic conditions, are met, the University is able to 'confirm' places to applicants. Once offers are confirmed, applicants' offer status will move from CF (conditional firm), to UF (unconditional firm) and applicants will be able to view this movement via UCAS Hub, UCAS' on-line application tracking service for applicants.
- 97 Offers are assessed, and results compared with offers, on an individual basis. It is at this point that the nature and potential impact of any individual extenuating circumstances is also considered.
- 98 The confirmation of results occurs electronically, in conjunction with other external electronic systems. The University reserves the right to amend any confirmation decisions made as a result of electronic system errors.
- 99 It is the responsibility of applicant to notify the University of any examination results required as part of their offers.
- 100 Buckinghamshire New University reserves the right to accept applicants who do not meet their conditional offer following their exam results. This decision will be made once all qualifications and grades are available and on a case by case basis. Applicants holding a conditional offer should be aware that the only way to be assured of their acceptance is by meeting the terms of their offer and acceptance with lower grades or failed qualifications is not assured.

## Appeals and Complaints

- 101 Appeals are typically considered to be cases in which an applicant feels that a specific decision was not made fairly or did not take into account relevant information which lead to an incorrect or unfair decision being reached.
- 102 The University will accept an appeal against an admission decision only when an applicant is able to provide evidence that prejudice or bias, in relation to equality and diversity issues, has influenced an outcome, or where evidence can be provided that procedural irregularities have occurred. Appeals will not be accepted against an academic judgement, except in cases where an administrative error has been made.
- 103 Requests for appeals should be directed, in writing, to [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk) for the attention of the Head of Admissions within 10 working days of confirmation of the application decision. Requests for appeals against admission decisions for research degrees will be forwarded to the Research Unit for investigation and response. Evidence supporting the grounds for an appeal should be provided by the applicant, in order that a decision may be reviewed. The review of a decision does not guarantee its amendment and the University reserves the right to uphold an original admission decision.
- 104 Responsibility for communicating, in writing, the result of an appeal lies with the Head of Admissions (taught courses), and the Research Unit (Research degrees).
- 105 Complaints are typically considered to be cases in which an applicant feels that they did not receive the level of customer service or attention that was expected during the admissions process and wishes for the handling of their application to be reviewed.
- 106 The university will ensure that all complaints and appeals are dealt with consistently, fairly and promptly. Applicants who make complaints will not be discriminated against.
- 107 All complaints are dealt with in confidence.
- 108 Complaints may be made in relation to the level of service received in the following areas:
- the behaviour of an employee of the University during the application process
  - the level of feedback provided, upon request from the applicant,
  - the way in which an application has been handled.
- 109 Complaints should be made by the applicant themselves. Complaints made anonymously cannot be dealt with, and complaints made by third parties (such as parents and guardians, teachers, advisors and educational agents) will only be considered in exceptional cases at the discretion of the Head of Admissions, and at the express permission of the applicant the complaint relates to.
- 110 The time scales outlined in this procedure will be followed to the best ability of Buckinghamshire New University Staff and complaints will be dealt with as soon as possible.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved within the advertised time frame, all relevant parties will be advised.

- 111 Buckinghamshire New University reserves the right not to consider complaints made by applicants outside of the time frame but recognises that there are some instances where complaints can be considered outside of this.
- 112 If a complaint is upheld, Buckinghamshire New University will promptly take the agreed action to come to a resolution in accordance with any other relevant policies or procedures. If it is not, the decision will be quickly communicated in a clear manner to the applicant.
- 113 **Informal Complaint;** Most complaints are resolved satisfactorily at this stage. Applicants should raise their first complaint in writing with the Admissions Team directly by contacting: [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk). The complaint will then be dealt with directly by the relevant Admissions Officer.
- 114 Informal Complaints should normally be made within 20 working days of the admissions decision or action about which the applicant wishes to complain.
- 115 The Admissions Officer will normally respond to the complaint within 10 working days and will retain a record of the complaint, correspondence and any action taken.
- 116 If the complainant feels that the decision/response was unfair or not in accordance with the Admissions Policy, the Formal Complaint Procedure should be followed.
- 117 **Formal Complaint;** If the applicant is not satisfied with the initial response to their informal complaint, a written complaint should be submitted, normally within 10 working days, to the Head of Admissions.
- 118 Complaints should include a short statement explaining the nature of the complaint and, where the informal procedure has been followed, details of the response received and the reason for dissatisfaction.
- 119 The Head of Admissions will normally acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days. The complaint will then be fully investigated, and a full written response will normally be provided within 20 working days.
- 120 The Head of Admissions' decision regarding the outcome of the complaint will be considered final.
- 121 If the complaint relates to the Head of Admissions, it should be made to the Director of Marketing and Student Recruitment. In this instance, their decision regarding the outcome of the complaint will be considered final.

## Late Applicants

- 122 In accordance with UCAS, the University accepts applications up to, and including, the official UCAS equal consideration deadline in January each year.

- 123 Applicants are invited to apply for programmes beyond this date, up to, and including, the final UCAS deadline for the submission of applications in June, provided spaces are still available. The next available intake will be displayed on the course pages of the University website.
- 124 Applications are considered in receipt order.

## Deferred Applications

- 125 A deferral is any instance in which an applicant requests to delay their enrolment on a programme by one year. This can be requested either on the original application form or at any stage in the application process up to enrolment.
- 126 Applicants may still be required to meet any offer conditions before a deferral can be confirmed.
- 127 Whilst the University accepts deferred applications, it cannot guarantee that a course will definitely run in the requested year of entry. Such applications can be made directly through UCAS at the time of applying. Applicants wishing to defer after submitting an application should contact the Admissions Office in the first instance at: [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk)
- 128 Requests to defer for multiple years will be considered on a case by case basis.

## Criminal Convictions

- 129 A previous criminal conviction does not necessarily preclude entry to Buckinghamshire New University, however a thorough and consistent process must be followed before an applicant is permitted to enrol at Buckinghamshire New University.
- 130 The University will only seek information about spent or unspent convictions where is necessary and appropriate to do so.
- 131 Applicants to some professional courses require mandatory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, in addition to the initial assessments by the University's Criminal Convictions Panel, in accordance with the requirements of the respective professional bodies representing their courses. For professional courses, it is essential that DBS clearance is given. Failure to receive this may result in an offer being withdrawn or, in cases where a student has enrolled, the termination of their studies. The procedure can be found on the University website.

## Applicants Under 18

- 132 The University welcomes applications from people of all ages. However, we have a duty of care towards all our students, employees and visitors and in the case of students joining before their 18th birthday this duty is enhanced as such students are regarded as children under UK law. The University, in admitting students under the age of 18, must ensure that all

appropriate legal obligations are recognised and discharged. Students that will be enrolling before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday will be required to provide proof of parental or guardian approval through completion of the relevant form: please see the *Safeguarding Under 18s and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure*.

- 133 Each applicant will therefore be assessed on his or her merits in the light of available information.
- 134 Students under the age of 18 may be restricted from participating in specific events and activities, however Buckinghamshire New University will try to ensure a similar, inclusive experience and information on restricted events will be provided at the start of the academic year.

## **Mature Applicants**

- 135 Applications from mature applicants (over 21), without the required entry qualifications, but who are able to demonstrate relevant experience, will be given consideration. Buckinghamshire New University welcomes applications from students of all ages and backgrounds, applicants are assessed on their own merits and no applicant to Buckinghamshire New University will be discriminated against on the basis of age.

## **International and EU applicants**

- 136 Our specific systems and processes as they apply to international applicants can be found in our *International Student Policy*, which should be read in conjunction with this policy.
- 137 In the context of this policy an international student is defined as a student who registers on a BNU award at the University or one of its registered sites from a country outside the UK that requires a Student Route visa to study in the UK.
- 138 Buckinghamshire New University recognises its responsibility for meeting legislative and other regulatory requirements, particularly in context of meeting its sponsorship duties as a Student Route Licence holder. These duties are under continual review by the Home Office; UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). While the University will endeavour to ensure that this policy and its related procedures remain current and accord to UK legislation, this policy will be superseded by any legislative or Home Office / UKVI policy requirements.
- 139 International, and EU applicants for whom English is not a first language are expected to hold an IELTS qualification or suitable equivalent. Typically for Undergraduate study a score of 6.0, and no individual element lower than 5.5 is expected. For Postgraduate study a score of 6.5,

Note: International and EU applicants who have not reached this level may attend a pre-session course which will help to improve their language skills. Please contact [admissions@bnu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bnu.ac.uk) for further information.

and no individual element lower than 6.0 is expected. Equivalent qualifications are listed on the University website.

- 140 Individual programmes and research degrees may stipulate a higher level, as required.
- 141 Buckinghamshire New University considers a wide range of qualifications for entry on to its programmes, taking advice and guidance from sector-wide products and publications such as ECCTIS (Formerly UK NARIC), The British Council and UCAS publications, this ensures our international qualification equivalencies are fair and consistent.
- 142 As part of the application process, Buckinghamshire New University requires applicants to indicate their residency status for fee paying purposes. The University uses this information to determine whether the applicant is eligible to pay Home or Overseas fees. If the University cannot make this assessment from the information in the application form, further information will be requested. If the applicant does not reply to repeated requests for further information, the applicant will be classified as an overseas fee payer. The applicant will be notified of this decision at the point of offer. If the applicant decides to accept the offer on the basis of the assessed fee this can be amended back to a Home fee status if the applicant is able to demonstrate meeting the appropriate eligibility criteria prior to enrolment on the course.
- 143 Tuition fee status is determined by the University using guidelines provided by the UK Council for International Students Affairs (UKCISA). An applicant's tuition fee status is allocated at the discretion of each individual University and there may be occasions when your fee status is deemed to be Home by one institution and Overseas by another. Third parties (e.g. the Student Loans Company or the National Health Service) will undertake an independent assessment of your fee status for eligibility for their loan or funding etc. and this may differ from the status determined by the University. Applicants are advised to check with any relevant third parties prior to enrolling at the institution to ensure that they are eligible for funding etc. for their chosen course. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Admissions Team.

- 144 Other requirements considered prior to issuing a CAS and as part of the consideration of an International Student Route application are; ensuring academic progression from previous study levels, checks to ensure the student does not exceed time limit to study, suitable ability to finance the course of study and satisfactory passing of an admissions credibility interview.

## Extenuating Circumstances

- 145 Applicants whose exams or qualifications have been disrupted by events beyond their control (e.g. illness, bereavement, problems with course provision) are welcome to submit a request for Extenuating Circumstances to be taken into account when assessing their application. In the event that an applicant believes they have extenuating circumstances which may result in lower than expected attainment in examinations, preventing them from meeting the conditions of their offer, a letter of explanation should be sent to the University's Admissions Team. This will be kept against the applicant's record and given consideration, alongside their results, during the Confirmation Period.
- 146 Letters of explanation should be accompanied by evidence from an appropriate person, qualified and able to confirm the extenuating circumstances. As an example, such persons may be defined as doctors or teachers. Submission of extenuating circumstances does not guarantee admission.

## Data Protection

- 147 All information held by the University will be treated in confidence, in line with the Data Protection Act, 1998, and applications will not be discussed with third parties, unless authorisation has been granted by applicants. Applicants have a right to access personal data held about them by the University by making a 'Data subject access request' and the University will respond in 40 days. Further information on data protection can be found on the government website below: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/ukpga\\_19980029\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/ukpga_19980029_en_1)



- 148 Applicants who wish to have their information discussed with a third party must give written consent to Buckinghamshire New University, stating the third party's name and contact details. In accordance with UCAS procedures, the University will discuss application details with the authorised contact listed on a UCAS application form.

## Freedom of Information

- 149 The University will respond to written requests for information, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, 2000, within 20 working days. For further information, refer to: [http://ico.org.uk/for\\_organisations/freedom\\_of\\_information/guide/act](http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/freedom_of_information/guide/act).

## Course Amendments

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

## Course Closures

- 151 In the event that Buckinghamshire New University withdraws or suspends a programme, any applicants will be contacted as soon as possible to inform them. Buckinghamshire New University will offer guidance, advice and support to students affected by course closure and endeavours to withdraw a programme only in unavoidable circumstances.
- 152 In any case where a course is withdrawn, applicants will be given the opportunity to apply for other programmes at Buckinghamshire New University or to receive direct assistance with finding and applying for vacancies at other institutions if required. More on this can be found within the University's [Student Protection Plan](#).

## Optional Modules

- 153 Where a course includes optional modules, the latest and most accurate information will be made available. However the University reserves the right not to deliver some modules if they are not viable at the point of delivery, this will normally be determined by student numbers.

## Terms and Conditions

- 154 All offers are made subject to the university Terms and Conditions of Admission. These can be found at [www.bnu.ac.uk/tac](http://www.bnu.ac.uk/tac).

## Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

<b>1. What is changing and why?</b>				
Very little, we've refreshed in line with latest practice but this was generally up to date. We have also made a change to reflect the greater choice of modules from C23 and impact on students. These document do refer applicants and student on to other processes and policies, notably for international students.				
<b>2. What do you know?</b>				
Policy is appropriate when compared against our competitor set and sector best practice. Compared with UCAS procedures and guidance as well as UKCISA and ECCTIS.				
<b>3. Assessing the impact</b>				
	<b>Could benefit</b>	<b>May adversely impact</b>	<b>What does this mean?</b> <i>Impacts identified from what you know (actual and potential)</i>	<b>What can you do?</b> <i>Actions (or why no action is possible) to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and foster good relations</i>
a) How could this affect different ethnicities? <i>Including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Our admissions policy makes provision for those who may have had a non-standard educational background and gives us appropriate room to make an assessment on academic potential.</b>	
b) How could this affect cisgender and transgender men and women (including maternity/pregnancy impact), as well as non-binary people?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>This information is not routinely used for Admissions processing, although gender is collected as a statutory requirement.</b>	<b>Limitations of the student records system allow us to only collect M or F as a value. A new record system could allow students to give a fairer reflection of how they identify.</b>

c) How could this affect disabled people or carers? <i>Including neurodiversity, invisible disabilities and mental health conditions.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Our Admissions policy and procedure splits academic suitability for a course away from assessment of reasonable adjustments and assessments of disability support.</b>	
d) How could this affect people from different faith groups?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>This information is collected, but not used within the admissions process. Not captured in the policy, however information on local faith groups is provided in the applicant journey.</b>	
e) How could this affect people with different sexual orientations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>This information is collected but not utilised within the admissions procedure. This group is not disadvantaged, but no specific support is offered.</b>	
f) How could this affect different age groups or generations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Our admissions policy makes provision for those who may have had a non-standard educational background and gives us appropriate room to make an assessment on academic potential. This includes supporting those who have had a break in education or are wishing to use higher education to move into a second or third career. We accept a very wide range of qualifications to support this.</b>	
g) How could this affect those who are married or in a civil partnership?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>This information is collected but not utilised within the admissions procedure. This group is not disadvantaged, but no specific support is offered.</b>	

			<b>There are allowances for student route students to bring dependants for postgraduate study, although this depends on government policy.</b>	
h) How could this affect people from different backgrounds such as: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Our use of contextual data allows us to take account of this information when assessing an application, and recognise the inequality within schools and further education providers. This will result in a fairer offer in terms of reduced entry requirements, or possibly an unconditional offer as appropriate.</b>	
i) How could this affect people with multiple intersectional experiences?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Our provisions are separate and can be stacked to support applicants with multiple intersectional experiences.	
<b>4. Overall outcome</b>				
No major change needed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adjust approach <input type="checkbox"/>	Adverse impact but continue <input type="checkbox"/>	Stop and remove <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>5. Details of further actions needed</b>				
<b>Admissions work will be represented in the Nexus project to replace our student record system. Equality impact will feed into this.</b>				
<b>6. Arrangements for delivery and future monitoring</b>				
<b>Continue to review approached in line with sector best practice. Review outcomes on an annual basis following the application cycle closure.</b>				
<b>7. Completed by:</b>	Owen Lord	Head of Admissions	<b>Date</b>	<b>23/05/2023</b>
<b>8. Signed off by:</b>	Dana Cameron	Director of MSR	<b>Date</b>	<b>20/06/2023</b>



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