University of Sheffield | Admissions Service

Student Admissions Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out the University's aims for the recruitment and admission of students. It also describes the principles and processes which are used to select and admit new students to undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeship courses.

Responsibility/Monitoring

This policy is the responsibility of the Head of Admissions. The policy is monitored and reviewed annually by the University in light of experience, research and good practice (see section 2). The policy takes account of relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation 2016, Equality Act 2010, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Human Rights Act 1998, Consumer Rights Act 2015, Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013, Education (Fee and Awards) Regulations 2007 (amended 2021), Apprenticeships, Skills and Learning Act (2009) and Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

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1. The University's recruitment and admissions aims

The University's recruitment and admissions support the goals and aims of the University as laid out in its Vision and Strategic Plan. The University's Vision and Strategic Plan can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision

Our goal is to produce Sheffield graduates who demonstrate impact, excellence and distinctiveness in their chosen field. We aim to recruit students:

- of the highest academic and intellectual ability
- with the potential and motivation to succeed on our courses
- who will fully engage with, and benefit from, studying at the University

We aim also to achieve a student community that is balanced and diverse in terms of experience and background, recognising the educational as well as cultural benefits that this brings to us all. Our commitment to widening participation and ensuring fair access is outlined in our current Access and Participation Plan, which can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/finance/access-and-participation

We welcome students with diverse perspectives, and our admissions processes are guided by University policies on freedom of speech and academic freedom: www.sheffield.ac.uk/free-speech

We recruit students by:

- providing clear and transparent admissions information to prospective applicants
- operating a fair and effective admissions process
- ensuring the consistent application of policy across the University
- encouraging applications from the widest range of educational, social and cultural backgrounds

We are committed to providing a fair, effective and professional admissions service which is consistent with good practice as defined in the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code and in line with UK consumer protection legislation and contract regulations.

2. Responsibility for admissions activities

Academic schools and the University's Admissions Service, along with other areas of the University, work in partnership to provide effective admissions services.

The **Admissions Service** has responsibility for determining and managing the University's Student Admissions Policy and procedures; providing advice and support to academic schools, enquirers and applicants; assessing applications and making offers on behalf of academic schools; and developing and managing effective systems for admissions.

The Admissions Service also provides training and events for all staff involved in admissions activities. This includes regular forums for Admissions Tutors/Selectors and support staff, targeted training sessions on specific issues and the organisation of working groups to examine particular issues.

Academic schools are responsible for determining entry requirements and assessment processes for each of their courses; assessing applications and making offers; and providing detailed and up-to-date course information for enquirers and applicants. Heads of academic schools delegate the responsibility for admissions matters to a principal Admissions Tutor/Selector (who may be supported by other staff within the school).

The University's **Student Recruitment and Population Sub-Group** (undergraduate, taught postgraduate and apprenticeships) and **University Postgraduate Research Student Committee** (postgraduate research) have responsibility for reviewing and monitoring central and school admissions policies, procedures and strategies for all University of Sheffield courses of study.

3. Information for enquirers and applicants

The University is committed to providing accurate admissions and course information which is clear, comprehensive and easily accessible for enquirers and applicants.

Admissions and course information, including detailed information about entry requirements and how we assess applicants, is published on our website:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses: www.sheffield.ac.uk/courses
- Degree apprenticeship courses: www.sheffield.ac.uk/apprenticeships

We aim to provide accurate and up-to-date information in our printed publications but, as printed material can be published more than 12 months before the beginning of a course, applicants should always refer to our website for the most up to date admissions and course information.

4. Entry requirements

The University welcomes applications from students who can demonstrate that they are able to benefit from the course they have chosen to study and from the learning, research and social environment which the University provides.

To ensure that all applicants are prepared for their studies, each course has an academic entry requirement which applicants will need to fulfil. Entry requirements are determined by academic staff and informed by their professional opinion of the level of academic preparation required for a student to succeed on a particular course.

- Students registering on **undergraduate courses** should normally possess at least three full A Levels, or equivalent
- Students registering on **postgraduate taught courses** should normally possess at least a lower second class honours degree, or equivalent. Some courses will have a higher academic requirement.
- Students registering on **postgraduate research courses** should normally possess at least an upper second class honours degree, or equivalent. Some courses will have a higher academic requirement.
- Students registering on **degree apprenticeship courses** should meet the entry requirements set for the specific apprenticeship course, which are published on the University website

The entry requirements for each course can be found on our website:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses: www.sheffield.ac.uk/courses
- Degree apprenticeship courses: www.sheffield.ac.uk/apprenticeships

Further information about requirements for undergraduate courses can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/requirements

We welcome applications from students studying a wide range of UK, European and international qualifications that offer effective preparation for study at the University. Information about the

qualifications we accept for entry to our undergraduate courses can be found via: www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/requirements. Information about international qualifications can be found via: www.sheffield.ac.uk/international/applying

Students applying for degree apprenticeships should meet the residency requirements set out in the government's funding rules (www.gov.uk/government/collections/funding-rules-for-apprenticeships). In addition, students will be required to spend a minimum of 50% of their working hours in England.

For some courses, we may be able to recognise a student's achievement at another institution as equivalent to the successful completion of part of the Sheffield course, enabling the student to join the Sheffield course at a later stage. For example, for undergraduate courses, students may be able to transfer directly into Level 2.

Applications are assessed holistically, and exceptions to academic entry requirements may be considered where applicants can demonstrate the potential to succeed via alternative means.

In addition to academic entry requirements, the University requires all students to show that their English language is at a level which allows them to successfully complete their chosen course of study. Information on acceptable English language qualifications can be found at:

- Undergraduates: www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/english-language
- Postgraduates: www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/english-language
- Degree apprenticeships: www.sheffield.ac.uk/apprenticeships

There are also non-academic additional requirements for applicants to a number of professional courses in areas such as health, social work and teaching, for example providing a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure or completing a satisfactory health check. Applicants to these courses are advised to read the University's Disclosure and Barring Service Policy Statement, which is available at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/dbs. More information is also supplied by the relevant academic schools.

5. Assessing applicants

The University looks for motivated students with the necessary academic preparation, as detailed in the entry requirements for each course, who will benefit from the University's learning and research environment.

We are keen to ensure that all applicants are provided with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills, potential and achievements. The University's methods of assessment are fair and valid, applied consistently for each course and regularly reviewed. The fairness and consistency of offer making for each course is managed by the Admissions Tutor/Selector and monitored by the Admissions Service. Each applicant is assessed on an individual basis, with academic discretion used in assessing the range of evidence presented by applicants.

In assessing the academic suitability and potential of applicants, we may consider the following information supplied in the application:

- Achievement in awarded qualifications
- Predicted achievement in qualifications which are being studied
- Performance in any qualifications not completed

- Personal or supporting statement, for evidence of motivation and commitment to the subject area(s) and the reasons for wanting to study at Sheffield
- References, for confirmation of academic potential and personal qualities

Admissions Tutors/Selectors may also draw on a variety of additional methods to further assess the suitability of applicants including:

- Interview
- Portfolio of work
- Research proposals (for postgraduate research applications)
- Discussions with employers (for degree apprenticeship applications)
- External tests, such as UCAT for applicants to Medicine and Dentistry and CASPER for applicants to Dental Hygiene and Dental Therapy

Information about school selection procedures is available in the prospectuses, in school course brochures and on school websites.

For admissions to undergraduate courses, Admissions Tutors are also encouraged to take into account contextual information (information that sets the application in its educational or socio-economic context) and use this as additional information to inform their assessment (for example, taking into account whether the applicant has faced challenges in their education and how this has affected their performance in qualifications). Further information on our use of contextual data can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/access-sheffield

6. Applying

6.1 How and when to apply

Applications for **undergraduate** courses are submitted via UCAS. Detailed information on how and when to apply is at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply or: www.ucas.com

Applications for **postgraduate** courses are submitted via the University's Postgraduate Online Application Form. Information on how and when to apply can be found at:

Postgraduate taught: www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/apply
Postgraduate research: www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/phd/apply

Applications for **initial teacher education (PGCE)** are submitted via DfE Apply. Information on how and when to apply can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/pgce/course or: www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training

Applications for **degree apprenticeship** courses are submitted via the University website. Information on how and when to apply is at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/apprenticeships

6.2 Time taken to consider an application

The University considers applications and makes decisions as quickly as possible. However, given the volume, range and quality of applications we receive we are not always able to return a decision immediately. Where we are not able to make a decision for some time, we contact applicants to explain the situation and let them know when they should expect a decision.

6.3 Communicating with applicants

The University recognises the importance of keeping applicants informed and aims to provide effective updates at key points during the admissions process. The University normally communicates with applicants by email.

We send a range of communications to applicants which include the following:

- Acknowledgment of the receipt of an application
- Confirmation that a decision has been made on the application
- Confirmation of the offer of entry and the terms and conditions for offer holders
- Confirmation of meeting the conditions of any offer of entry
- Introductory and registration information

In addition to the above, applicants receive communications from academic schools that may include an invitation to visit the University and course-specific information.

6.4 Offers of entry

Successful applicants will receive an offer of entry from the University. The offer of entry will either be Conditional on the basis of qualifications or requirements yet to be completed, or Unconditional where all the academic requirements have been met. Offer conditions will be formulated in line with published entry requirements, ensuring transparency and consistency for applicants.

All the qualifications used to secure a place at the University will be verified as part of the application process, either with the awarding institution or with an approved third party such as UCAS. We will contact applicants where we need their assistance to verify their qualifications. More information is available on our webpages at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/verification

Any applicant receiving an offer will be issued with the University's Terms and Conditions upon Acceptance of an Offer, which provide further information about the commitments the University and applicant make when the applicant accepts an offer of entry. These can be found at:
www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/terms

6.5 Feedback

We feel it is important that unsuccessful applicants have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application. The University provides feedback on request to unsuccessful applicants. Feedback can be requested by email by contacting the Admissions Service or relevant academic school.

We aim to respond to requests for feedback within 10 working days of receiving the request. We will provide feedback in writing by email. Following our feedback, if applicants believe that they have grounds for a formal review of the admissions decision, they should consult the University's Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants (see section 9).

6.6 Applicants with additional support needs

The University welcomes applications from disabled people. All applications are assessed following standard procedures (see section 5) and consideration of support requirements remains entirely separate. An assessment of support needs, usually in the form of an appointment or discussion with the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service, can be carried out to ensure that the University provides

appropriate support. Reference should also be made to the Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise policies where necessary:

www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/fitness-study
www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar

In the unlikely event that the adjustments needed to provide the required support are not considered reasonable, the University undertakes to offer the applicant support in submitting an alternative application where appropriate.

Further information about disability and dyslexia support at the University can be found at:
www.sheffield.ac.uk/disability-dyslexia-support

6.7 Fitness to Study

We seek to enable as many students as possible to achieve their potential and provide a range of support to facilitate this. Occasionally a student is deemed not fit to begin or continue their registration at the University. Further information can be found in our formal Fitness to Study Policy at:
www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/fitness-study

6.8 Applicants with criminal convictions

As part of its duty of care to staff and students, the University asks applicants accepting an offer for information about any relevant criminal convictions. Assessment of any information supplied is supported by a panel of experienced staff and the process is managed by the Head of Undergraduate Admissions or Head of Postgraduate Admissions as appropriate. Having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent someone from studying at the University of Sheffield. This will depend on the nature of the course applied for and the circumstances of and background to the offence. More information is available on our webpages at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/convictions

6.9 Applicants requiring a Student visa

If an applicant requires a Student visa to study in the UK but will not be eligible for a visa to study on their course, we will not be able to offer the applicant a study place. If a place has already been offered at the point we become aware of the applicant's ineligibility for a Student visa, we will withdraw our offer. More information is available in our Policy for issuing Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS):
www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/cas

6.10 Applicants requiring ATAS clearance

If an International offer-holder requires Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance to study on their course and their application for ATAS clearance is refused, we may withdraw our offer, or amend it to a place on a course for which ATAS clearance is not required.

6.11 Fraud and omitted details

The University reserves the right to withdraw any application which has been found to contain fraudulent information, and any offer made on the basis of such an application. The University also may withdraw an application or offer if an applicant has been found to have omitted key information from their application.

Any student found to have been admitted on the basis of fraudulent information may have their studies terminated.

6.12 Use of AI in the application process

The University takes a positive approach to artificial intelligence (AI). We understand that AI can be a powerful tool to support learning and are committed to ensuring that our students have the opportunity to develop AI literacy, without compromising the principles of academic rigour and integrity. We recognise that some applicants may wish to use AI to help them prepare an application to study at the University, for example by prompting AI to ask them questions to stimulate reflection, or by asking AI to identify weaknesses in a draft. It is important, however, that the final, submitted application remains entirely the applicant's own work and does not incorporate any AI-generated text or images. If we learn that inappropriate use of AI has contributed to an application, including in any interview attended, we may withdraw the application, including any offer we have made.

6.13 Re-admission of students

If an applicant has previously studied at the University, we require that they indicate this in their application. If an applicant has previously been excluded from the University or from a particular faculty, they should also indicate this in their application. If we decide to offer a place to a previously excluded applicant, their re-admission will need to be approved by the relevant faculty as part of the admission and registration process.

6.14 Deferred applications

The University welcomes deferred applications for the majority of undergraduate subject areas (applications for admission the year after the application is made) and will also usually consider requests from undergraduate applicants to defer after an application has been submitted. The University will usually consider requests from postgraduate applicants to defer after an offer has been issued. The University normally allows postgraduate applicants to defer their application for a maximum of two academic years from the original start date. Requests to defer should be directed to the Admissions Service in the first instance. We are not able to accept deferred applications, or requests to defer post-application, for degree apprenticeships.

6.15 Unreasonable behaviour

The University is committed to ensuring that interaction with applicants and their advisers is conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner and it expects that communication from applicants and their advisers is conducted in the same way. The University will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour or language towards its employees or members of the wider University community during the admissions process. Hostile, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate behaviour or language, whether expressed verbally or in writing, will be viewed seriously and may adversely affect the consideration of an application, appeal or complaint. The University will normally warn an applicant or adviser that their behaviour or language is inappropriate and that action is being considered, but where the behaviour or language is particularly inappropriate no warning need be given before action is taken. Such action may include a referral in line with the University's discipline regulations, the withdrawal of an offer or the rejection of a current or future application. Conduct which constitutes a criminal offence will be referred to the relevant authorities.

6.16 Applicant conduct

University of Sheffield students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct set out on our webpages at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/student-code-conduct. Where we become aware of a prospective student conducting themselves in a manner inconsistent with this code, we may approach them to draw their attention to the code and discuss their behaviour with them. For example, we may ask for a written explanation of their behaviour and the context in which it took place, to help us establish the individual's suitability for membership of our community. Where an individual in this position proceeds to register as a student at the University, we may also ask them to meet with our support services when they join us. In serious cases, inappropriate conduct may adversely affect the consideration of an application and could result in the withdrawal of an offer or the rejection of an application. Assessments of the appropriateness or otherwise of conduct are made in line with the University's guidance on freedom of speech and academic freedom: www.sheffield.ac.uk/free-speech

7. Financial information

The University requires applicants to all undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to provide evidence that they have access to sufficient funds to pay tuition fees and living expenses during their studies. Information about funding is requested during the admission and registration process.

Detailed information on tuition fees and student finance can be found at:

- Undergraduate: www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/fees-funding
- Postgraduate taught: www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/fees
- Postgraduate research: www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/phd/fees
- Degree apprenticeships: www.sheffield.ac.uk/apprenticeships

As part of the application process, the University requires applicants to indicate whether they are eligible to pay Home (UK) or Overseas levels of tuition fees. The University uses the information provided by applicants to determine which category of fee they should pay, in accordance with national guidelines laid down by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (www.ukcisa.org.uk/student-advice/fees/know-the-basics-for-he-england). If we cannot make this determination from information provided in the application, we ask applicants to provide further information.

We may ask applicants to pay a deposit towards the course tuition fee when they accept an offer, in order to confirm that they intend to study at the University. The tuition fee deposit will be automatically deducted from the course tuition fee upon registration. More information is available on our webpages at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/feedeposits

8. Applicant data

In connection with the application process the University collects, holds and processes information about its applicants. This information may include personal data (which identifies an applicant as an individual) and sensitive personal data (which includes information relating to an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health, sex life or sexual orientation or criminal convictions).

The personal data submitted as part of each application is used to assess the suitability of an applicant for study at the University. Anonymised data is also used by the University for statistical and reporting purposes.

The University may pass applicant personal data to government bodies or the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Further information about how HESA processes personal data can be found in the HESA Student Collection Notice: www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/notices. The University may also share data with third party organisations for the purposes of research. We will only do this where ethical approval has been granted and we have established a lawful basis under data protection law.

The personal data within applications will form part of the student record for applicants who are admitted to the University. Further details about how such personal data will be processed are set out in the University's Terms and Conditions upon Acceptance of an Offer, which will be provided to applicants who are offered a place at the University, and in the University's Privacy Notices: www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy

Personal data for applicants who are not admitted to the University is deleted after three years.

When processing applicant personal data the University complies with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018, as well as all other legislation enacted in the UK in respect of the protection of personal data. Further information about data protection policies at the University can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection

9. Appeals and complaints

The University aims to consider all applicants fairly and in line with the principles outlined in the Student Admissions Policy. However, we recognise that there may be occasions where applicants wish to appeal (request a review of an admissions decision), or complain about the admissions process.

If an applicant feels that they may have a cause for appeal or complaint, the University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants can be found at: www.sheffield.ac.uk/study/policies/appeals-complaints-applicants

We advise all students to note the section on Feedback (section 6.5) prior to submitting an appeal or complaint.

10. Further information

For further information about University of Sheffield, please visit our website at: www.sheffield.ac.uk

If you wish to contact the Admissions Service, please follow our contacts for prospective students: www.sheffield.ac.uk/contact/study