



# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

## Undergraduate Home Contextual Offer Policy

<b>Version number</b> 1.3		<b>Status (draft/final)</b> Updated Aug 2023		<b>Owning Directorate / Faculty</b> External Relations	
<b>Summary of any amendments:</b> New University-wide policy applicable to undergraduate taught degree programmes. No policy previously in place.					
<b>Document objectives:</b> To establish the principle that an applicant’s background – and/or personal, challenging circumstances that may have impacted an applicant’s education – may be taken into consideration in the admissions process.					
<b>Intended Recipients:</b> This policy is relevant to admission decisions for Home applicants to undergraduate taught programmes at the University of Plymouth (abbreviated to UGH). The criteria for the application of the policy are to be reviewed annually.					
<b>Approving Body and Date Approved</b>				Student Number Planning Committee October 2022.	
<b>Date of Issue:</b>				August 2023	
<b>Review Date:</b>				Annually	
<b>Contact for review:</b>				Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions, External Relations	
Version	Date	Author(s)	Replaces	Comment	
1.1	Oct 2022	Emma Corry	N/A	New policy. Issue of policy delayed until application of policy approved	
1.2	Aug 2023	Emma Corry	1.1	Approved by Chairs Action. Policy amended Aug '23 to remove PGTH.	
1.3	Aug 2023	Emma Corry	1.2	Approved by UEG to align with application of policy for entry 2024. Section 5.5 of previous policy revised to reflect only criteria for application of the policy for entry 2024.	

## **1. Introduction**

This policy aims to provide full transparency for applicants in stating that information about an applicant's background/characteristics and/or personal circumstances will be taken into consideration in the assessment of an applicant's suitability to study at the University of Plymouth (the University).

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The University's Student Number Planning Committee is responsible for approving admissions policies and practice.

The University's Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures regarding student recruitment and admissions are applied fairly and consistently, and in line with the University's strategic aims and objectives and any relevant legislation.

The University's Admissions team will apply such policies and procedures when assessing applications on behalf of the institution.

## **3. Relevant legislation**

This policy incorporates and complies with relevant legislation and associated University policies, including but not limited to: Equality policy & legislation; Data Protection legislation; Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

### **3.1 Data Protection**

- (i) In addition to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation, the University will process personal data relating to applicants in line with its Student Contract, the Data Protection Policy, and Applicant Privacy Policy. The University will not disclose to a third party any details regarding an individual's application without the applicant's permission to do so. This policy of non-disclosure includes family members of the applicant.
- (ii) However, the legislation requires the University to release certain information to UK authorities upon request to assist those authorities with the prevention and detection of fraud or other crimes. The University will release the requested information upon receipt of an appropriate request from UK authorities such as (but not limited to) the Police, Home Office (for immigration and related matters), local authorities, and the Department for Work and Pensions.
- (iii) The University may use anonymised data collected as part of an individual's application for the purpose of fulfilling statistical and reporting requirements.

### **3.2 Changes to legislative and regulatory frameworks**

In the interest of fairness and transparency, the University aims to eliminate making changes to its admissions policy and procedures mid-cycle. However, it may be the

case that external agencies (including those of the United Kingdom Government) amend or update their own regulations or guidance. Where it is required to do so, the University will comply with such changes and reserves the right to vary its admissions policy and/or procedures accordingly. In such cases, the University will explain the change it is making, the context of the change, and how the change is likely to affect applicants.

#### **4. Scope**

- 4.1 This policy applies to all Home applicants wishing to study an undergraduate taught degree programme at the University. This policy acknowledges that an applicant's circumstances and experiences may have impacted their education and academic performance prior to the submission of their application.
- 4.2 This policy does not cover circumstances which have occurred after application, and which may impact a student's performance in their entry qualifications. Students must follow the appropriate processes offered by the awarding bodies in these circumstances.

#### **5. Policy**

- 5.1 The University considers academic performance as an integral part of identifying students with the potential to succeed on one of its undergraduate degree programmes. The University's advertised entry requirements include the academic attainment it determines an individual student needs to be successful, and specifies required subjects where pre-requisite foundation knowledge is needed to succeed.
- 5.2 The University does, however, recognise that some applicants will have faced challenges during their pre-application education which may have impacted their ability to take qualifying examinations or achieve the grades required. The University will be flexible in considering such applicants providing this does not undermine their chances of being successful on their chosen degree programme. Decisions will always be based on a holistic view of the applicant and offers will be made on the basis of the University's legitimate expectation that the applicant will flourish during their studies.
- 5.3 The University will consider all information provided by an applicant in the admissions selection process. Where there is evidence of challenging circumstances that may have had a detrimental impact on an applicant's education, appropriate flexibility may be given. This may include: agreeing alternative means of meeting entry requirements; making an aspirational or adjusted offer; or considering an applicant for an alternative programme of study, entry point or mode of study. Requirements for specific knowledge or subjects are rarely waived as these are considered a prerequisite of success.

*Note: some requirements are set by professional standards registration boards which the University is not permitted to adjust.*

- 5.4 In no circumstances can evidence of challenging circumstances waive the need for applicants to demonstrate their suitability for the programme to which they have applied or guarantee the offer of a place.

- 5.5 For entry 2024, the University considers the following to be possible indicators of personal circumstances or challenges that may have impacted on an individual's education and academic performance:
- Students from low-income households or classed as having low socioeconomic status (most commonly measured using Indices of Multiple Deprivation etc)

*This list is not definitive and may change in future policies.*

## **6. Procedure**

- 6.1 The University's Admissions team will consider information provided within the application and apply this policy as agreed. Such information may be gathered from markers within the UCAS (Universities & Colleges Admissions Service) application such as free school meals data, information which may be included within the personal statement, references provided, or through other documentation provided by the applicant. Any additional information provided by the applicant should explain both the challenges faced and the impact this has had on their education. The University reserves the right to request additional evidence to verify the information provided.
- 6.2 Applicants who inform the University of any educational impact of challenging circumstances experienced must provide such evidence by the relevant undergraduate (UCAS) application deadline. Information provided after any application deadline may not be considered. Failure to provide relevant information cannot be used as grounds for an admissions appeal or complaint later in the process.
- 6.3 Information provided will be processed in accordance with the University's Applicant Privacy Policy.
- 6.4 University Admissions staff will take account of any information provided by the deadline in their selection processes.
- 6.5 The University may apply this policy to applicants on a case-by-case basis where it is deemed appropriate.

## **7. Other relevant policies and procedures**

Terms and conditions of the Student Contract

Criminal Convictions policy

Complaints from Applicants Procedure

Admissions Policy

Applicant Privacy policy