Document Q2

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND ADMISSIONS POLICY

Approved by Academic Board – February 2019

Latest Amendments: March 2020

Next Review: February 2022
1 The University of Law’s (the University’s) Admissions Policy has been informed by the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) Quality Code for Higher Education, specifically the Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. The QAA’s Quality Code is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education institutions and sets out how academic standards are established and maintained and how the quality of learning opportunities are assured and enhanced. This policy sits within The University of Law’s Quality and Standards Code which provides a suite of policies designed to safeguard the academic standards of The University of Law and to assure the quality of learning opportunities offered; this policy should therefore be read in conjunction with other relevant policies within the Code and the University’s strategies.

Introduction

2 The University recognises that central to this policy is the University’s responsibility for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name and the quality of learning opportunities for students. This policy sets out the scope of the University’s responsibilities for the management of arrangements for admitting students to its programmes of study.

3 In applying its Admissions Policy the University aims to encourage and maintain equality of opportunity for all applicants, irrespective of age, creed, disability, ethnic origin, gender, nationality and sexual orientation.

Definitions

4 NARIC – National Academic Recognition Information Centre

5 UCAS – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

6 CAB – Central Applications Board

7 BarSAS – Bar Student Application System

8 Admissions - Refers to the practices and processes developed and delivered by the University that relate to admitting a prospective student up to the point of enrolment on a course through an application and selection process.

9 Recruitment - A broad range of activities and initiatives undertaken by the University and its representatives prior to the point of admission. This includes outreach, events and various marketing activities, which ultimately encourage prospective students to either apply to, or start a course with, the University.

10 Widening access – The University uses this term to refer to activities and initiatives designed to enable different groups of people to gain entry to higher
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education. This includes the extent to which the University may (or may not) vary its admission or selection processes according to local or national policy guidelines and expectations.

11 Prospective student - Refers to all those who are applying or considering applying for any course, at any level and employing any mode of study, with the University.

12 Current student - Students who are registered/enrolled on any course at undergraduate or postgraduate level, with the University. An individual becomes a 'current student' at the point of enrolment.

13 Contextual data - Data and information that enables the University to put attainment in the context of the circumstances in which it was obtained, for example, educational, geo-demographic and socio-economic background data.

14 Inclusive admissions - An admissions system which seeks to minimise any unnecessary barriers in the process which may prevent some groups of applicants from making a successful application.

Responsibility for this policy

15 Ultimate responsibility for the development of clear and effective processes and procedures associated with the quality assurance and maintenance of standards of academic provisions and overseeing their application lies with the Academic Board of the University.

Expectation

16 The University's recruitment, selection and admissions policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support the University in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Key Aims and Principles

17 Recruitment, selection and admission to all of the programmes offered by the University is governed by this policy.

18 In implementing the policy the University aims to adhere to principles of transparency, efficiency, professionalism, reliability, inclusion and courtesy. This approach supports the University's ongoing objective to support and protect its core values of offering and maintaining academic and professional excellence.
19 The University considers all applications to study on the basis of the applicant’s ability and potential to succeed within the University’s learning environment.

20 The University admits students to its programmes on the basis of prior academic achievement. Professional achievement may also be recognised and is typically exemplified by managerial-level experience.

21 The entry criteria for each programme will reflect the programme and professional body requirements of that programme and will be agreed by the Academic Board and made publicly available on the University’s website.

22 The University’s approach to admissions is informed by the University’s equality and widening participation and diversity strategies and complies with equal opportunities legislation.

23 The University ensures that all recruitment, selection and admissions processes are annually reviewed and enhanced to ensure that they:

23.1 remain current and effective;

23.2 accurately reflect the missions and strategic objectives of the University; and

23.3 meet customer, professional, academic, legislative and regulatory requirements.

24 The University undertakes robust statistical analysis to ensure that offers are consistent and fair, and promote equality of opportunity for all.

25 All staff involved in the admissions and recruitment process are appropriately selected, qualified and trained to deliver a consistent, fair and professional service to all clients.

Procedural Approach

Recruitment, selection and admissions processes

26 The University provides clear information on programmes available and the selection criteria through a number of different sources, these include:

26.1 the University’s website

26.2 UCAS Coursefinder

26.3 prospectuses
26.4 online portal for students who have been made an offer
26.5 University events
26.6 BarSAS
26.7 CAB

27 The selection of applicants is conducted by an Admissions team, including Programme Directors and Heads, Specialist Admissions staff and other senior staff.

28 All staff involved in the Admissions process are kept up-to-date with internal and external regulations, along with entry requirements and equivalent qualifications for all programmes. All procedures within the Admissions department are formally documented. Staff use NARIC as a benchmark for international qualification comparisons in addition to internally created benchmarking processes approved by the Admissions Committee of the Academic Board.

29 The University is committed to widening access to and participation in higher education and makes it clear to all prospective students how information provided during the application process will be used including any use of contextual data.

Recruitment activities to assist prospective students in making informed decisions

30 The University is conscious of the commitment in time and money that applicants make in choosing to join one of its programmes. It therefore ensures that applicants have access to comprehensive information about its programmes from the first point of contact made by an applicant. All published information complies with the University's Published Information Policy.

31 The University aims to ensure consistency in the information it provides to all of its applicants, both domestic and international. The University encourages applicants to be in a position to make an informed decision about the programme and the mode which is most suitable for their needs.

32 In addition to promotional literature in appropriate formats and our website, the University’s promotional activities normally include:

32.1 on-campus open days to provide applicants with information about the University's programmes;

32.2 on-campus employability workshops and awareness days to demonstrate in practice the relevance of the programmes in a professional context;
32.3 participation at schools’ and other higher education providers’ careers events both in the UK and internationally;

32.4 online webinars to provide prospective students with information and the opportunity to ask questions in real time; and

32.5 presence across multiple social media platforms where students can engage with the University in a format most suiting their personal preferences.

The University ensures its programmes are promoted by staff who have first-hand experience of both the academic execution of programmes and the recruitment process adopted by employers in the appropriate sector.

The admissions process – how prospective students know what they have to do

34. The University’s website explains the application process for each programme, including;

34.1 information for students on application and acceptance deadlines;

34.2 complaints procedures;

34.3 how and when to apply for a course of study;

34.4 what the application and selection process involves;

34.5 key milestones in the process;

34.6 expected communications between the University and prospective student; and

34.7 deadlines for financial support arrangements such as scholarships, bursaries or government loans. This also includes a link to the relevant page to apply for any University programmes.

35. Certain programmes are applied for through external online application systems, for which relevant links are provided on the website.

36. Students who require learning support because of disability or other special needs are requested to disclose this at the point of application. The University takes its responsibility under the Equality Act seriously and only uses the information disclosed to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided to students to enable them successfully to undertake our programmes without prejudice. Further information on this can be found in the University’s policies under Q4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement.
Offer, confirmation of acceptance and joining e-mails make clear to students what they are required to do in order to enrol on the programme. Prospective students receive the terms and conditions and fee schedule information for their chosen course at the point of offer in order to ensure that they are fully aware of any financial terms and the circumstances under which they both become liable for or may be refunded any deposit or tuition fee amounts. The offer letter also contains core information on start date, end date, location and mode of study.

A confirmation email is sent out within 48 hours of a student accepting a place. A joining email is sent six weeks prior to the course commencing where possible with further details including:

38.1 programme start dates;
38.2 timetable;
38.3 fee and payment information; and
38.4 any actions to complete before the programme commences.

Entry requirements

There are written criteria, agreed by the University’s Academic Board and in compliance with programme and professional body requirements, for each programme. These are reviewed annually. All entry requirements are available on the University’s website. These requirements include both academic and non-academic requirements.

The application process is inclusive and allows all prospective students to make an application and receive a fair outcome regardless of background. Admissions decisions and offers are made without reference to individual disability or other special needs, and are subject only to agreeing satisfactory learning support arrangements with each prospective student.

The University welcomes international applicants. International applicants follow the same admissions process as UK applicants. NARIC is used as a benchmark for assessing international qualifications. Where English language capability needs to be demonstrated for whatever reason, the requisite levels are clearly outlined on the website under entry requirements for each specific programme.

International applicants are also subject to the University’s policies under the UK Government’s Tier 4 requirements.

In accordance with the University regulations, applicants who will be under 18 years of age at the time of entry are required to comply with the relevant University policies.
Notifying Applicants of Decisions

44 An applicant initially receives an acknowledgement email from the Admissions team upon receipt of the application.

45 Thereafter, the Admissions team conveys the University’s decision to the applicant. Decisions on applications are normally communicated via email to applicants within seven calendar days of receipt of application or by the fixed timelines enforced by UCAS, the Bar Standards Board, the Solicitors Regulation Authority and other similar professional bodies.

46 Applicants are informed if further information or process is required before the University is able to make a decision on their application along with the reason(s) for obtaining the further information and/or additional process.

47 Where the admissions decision is the offer of a place, the offer email indicates how to accept this offer through the online portal.

48 Decisions for undergraduate programmes are communicated initially via UCAS. If an applicant for an undergraduate programme is made an offer, a postal letter and offer pack are sent.

49 All decisions of the Admissions team are recorded, with any reasons for refusal.

Offers

50 The offer email or letter (as appropriate) includes or refers applicants to details of:

50.1 clear information as to what the conditional or unconditional nature of the offer has been based on

50.2 programme fees;

50.3 programme dates;

50.4 terms and conditions of the offer;

50.5 fee schedules;

50.6 acceptance and registration deadlines;

50.7 the process for declining an offer, transferring, deferring or cancelling a place.
Programme changes

51 Although the University takes all steps to avoid changes to a programme between application and registration, sometimes it may be necessary to change the specification or location of a programme, or discontinue a programme. Programme changes are governed by University policies.

52 Any such changes to programmes are communicated to applicants as soon as possible by the Admissions Department. The Admissions Department provides email details and options to each applicant.

Registration and Induction

53 Once a place has been accepted and prior to commencing their programme, applicants are required to complete an online enrolment form.

54 The University ensures the efficient and effective integration of applicants onto their programmes. Applicants who have accepted a place will be provided with clear and consistent information to aid programme registration and induction. Information is available in a range of accessible formats.

Feedback, Complaints and Appeals

55 The Admissions team provides email feedback to any unsuccessful applicant on receipt of a written or email request.

56 The University operates an efficient, effective and courteous admissions service to all applicants. In the event of a problem occurring at any stage of the recruitment, selection or admission process then the University resolves the matter informally in a speedy and effective manner. Should an informal resolution not be possible then a complaint may be made in writing to the University Complaints Officer under the University’s External Persons Complaints Policy.

57 Complaints are considered in accordance with the University’s External Persons Complaints Policy. The University Complaints procedure can be used to cover the following types of complaint:

57.1 a complaint about the University’s handling of a query or an application for admission for example a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration; or

57.2 allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or even-handedly.
The University reserves the right to refuse admission to any of its programmes to an applicant who:

58.1 does not meet the entry requirements specified for the programme, including requirements set by professional and other external bodies;

58.2 would contravene UKVI compliance by the University;

58.3 during previous study with us or any part of the application process displayed conduct deemed to be unacceptable in accordance with University policies;

58.4 has unspent criminal convictions which suggest that the applicant may pose a danger to the University’s students, staff or visitors.

59 The decision made by the University is final and there is no appeal against any decision concerning selection or admission. Applicants are advised to use the complaints procedure.

60 The University actively engages with students who have recently gone through the admissions process. This includes the use of insight surveys carried out each intake with a view to continually improving the process for future diverse cohorts. Such procedures include engagement with declined students as well as those who successfully completed the application process.

**Deferrals**

61 Students are permitted to defer the start of their studies once only. Should a student wish to defer for a second time they will be invited to make a fresh application.

**Data protection**

62 The University collects personal data as part of Admissions processes. This information is held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the University’s Privacy Policy.

**Responsibility for the provision**

63 Responsibility for effective implementation of the Admissions Policy lies with the Director of Conversion & Enrolment who assumes overall responsibility for the Admissions function.
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Monitoring and review

64 Responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Admissions Policy lies with the Academic Board.

Date for next review:

February 2022

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