E1. Admissions Policy

E1.1 General Statement

The University affirms the key objective of providing educational opportunities for people from the region, nationally and internationally. The University seeks to harness students’ personal and intellectual growth, provide access for those who would not otherwise contemplate higher education and prepare students for life beyond the University. The Admissions Policy is designed to support the University's strategic goals and in particular to ensure that students are admitted to programmes of the University in accordance with the principles of the Policy on Equal Opportunities for Students (E12.).

E1.2 Responsibility for admission

The Articles of Government specify that the Academic Board is responsible for the criteria for the admission of students to the University. The Vice Chancellor has ultimate executive responsibility for the arrangements for the admission of students. Responsibility for managing and co-ordinating the general university wide admissions process lies with the Academic Registry. Assessing the suitability of applicants is the primary responsibility of the Admissions Tutors.

E1.3 Admissions Tutors

Admission tutors are responsible for assessing the suitability of applicants in full accord with the admissions criteria approved by the Academic Board. For purposes of clarity the title 'Admissions Tutor' is a generic one and relates to any member of staff with designated responsibility for admitting applicants to all programmes including research programmes.

E1.4 Essential Criteria

The essential criteria for admission to the University are guided by the requirements of the Policy on Equal Opportunities for Students (Annex 1).

4.1 There should be a reasonable expectation that anyone admitted to a programme of study will be able to fulfil the objectives of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award.

4.2 At validation the minimum entry requirements will be specified in terms of qualifications or experience (or both) expected to be commonly offered by applicants.
4.3 In considering individual applicants for admission to a programme of study, the University will seek evidence of personal, professional and educational experiences that provide indications of ability to meet the demands of the programme. The University adheres to the principle of equality of opportunity for applicants of equal potential.

E1.5 Minimum Entry Requirements

Minimum entry requirements are set and approved by the Academic Board for all programmes are defined within E15. Individual applicants may be admitted on the basis of a wide range of qualifications, experience or both, provided the essential criteria are met.

Entry requirements for other qualifications should be consonant with the standards of prior knowledge and skills stipulated for the award(s) in question.

E1.6 Admission with academic credit

6.1 General Principles

6.1.1 The University recognises CAT, ECTS and credit from other higher education institutions and Oxford Brookes University's provision is credit rated in line with national conventions.

6.1.2 If the University is satisfied that the applicant has fulfilled some of the progression and assessment requirements of the programme by means other than attendance on the planned programme, and should be able, by completing the remaining requirements, to fulfil the objectives of the programme and attain the standard required for the award, that applicant may be admitted to any appropriate point in the programme.

6.1.3 In exercising discretion in this respect the University will ensure that such admissions accord with its requirements relating to the standards of its awards and with good practice throughout higher education in the United Kingdom. Specifically, the accreditation of prior learning (both certificated and experiential) will be conducted in accordance with the principles, procedures and guidance in the University's guide to its Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme.

6.1.4 Admission with academic credit is subject to the same principles as admission to the beginning of a course. Subject to the requirements of the relevant course regulations, the University has discretion to admit a student with specific credit, which means that the student is considered to have passed certain elements and will, where course regulations permit, be graded. Similarly, a student may be admitted with exemption from certain elements of a programme, which means that the student is not required to take those elements but may, as appropriate, be required to take alternatives.

6.1.5 Course/programme regulations may specify limits for the maximum amount of specific credit which may be awarded consistent with the standard of the award, University policy and any relevant external requirements.

6.1.6 The principles above apply to individual admissions only. Where applicants with a particular qualification are to be admitted regularly with a standard amount of credit, the University will expect the arrangement to be reflected in the course regulations and approved by the appropriate quality assurance procedures of the University. Where any such arrangements involve collaboration with another body, for example an agreement to
admit students who have successfully completed a course offered by that body, but not terminating in a qualification generally recognised in the UK, the University requires a credit rating agreement to be approved.

6.1.7 The possibilities of multiple entry and exit points should be considered as part of course validation and review and the course regulations formulated accordingly.

6.2 The assessment of prior experiential learning (APEL)

The assessment of prior experiential learning is subject to these guiding principles:

6.2.1 Responsibility rests with the applicant for making a claim to have acquired knowledge and skills and for supporting the claim with appropriate evidence, although assistance may be given.

6.2.2 The learning derived from experience must be identified in order to be assessed.

6.2.3 The identification of prior learning comes through systematic reflection on experience writing of clear statements about what was actually learned and the collection and collation of evidence to support those statements.

6.2.4 Academic assessment is the responsibility of academic staff, who may employ any appropriate procedure to arrive at an academic judgement about the evidence of prior learning submitted.

6.2.5 Where it is proposed to allow entry with specific credit, the methods of assessment must be such that the judgement made can be considered by external examiners and Examination Committees.

6.2.6 The academic function of assisting the applicant to prepare evidence of learning should be separated from that of assessing that learning. A variety of ways of assisting applicants have been suggested and developed:

   a) Personal interview.
   b) Class or group work, which could be a time-tabled course.
   c) Tutorials.
   d) Specially designed manual or study pack.

The approach chosen will be governed by the nature of the course and the number of prospective applicants for whom APEL is appropriate.

6.2.7 If the applicant's prior learning is more difficult to quantify, it may be necessary for the University to assess this learning, either by requiring the applicant to take the normal progression assessments of the course or by some other appropriate form of assessment.

6.3 Industrial experience and training and supervised work experience

6.3.1 An applicant may be judged to have satisfied, wholly or in part, the aims of supervised work experience on a course for which they have applied. In considering such applications institutions should note:

   a) the quality of training or supervised work experience previously undertaken;
b) the relevance of that training or supervised work experience to the course to which the student is to be admitted;
c) the quality of the supervision and assessment of the training or supervised work experience;
d) whether the granting of such specific credit would still enable the student to meet professional or other requirements which the supervised work experience within the course is intended to satisfy.

6.3.2 In some cases, it may be more appropriate for an applicant to be advised to follow a course which does not normally contain an element of supervised work experience.

6.3.3 In cases of sandwich awards specific credit shall normally be limited to half the placement requirements of the course.

6.3.4 On entry to a course that has a requirement for study abroad, a student may be exempted from that requirement and the course may be shortened correspondingly if the student, by virtue of prior expertise, has, on entry to the course, already achieved the learning outcomes for which the period abroad is designed.

6.4 Vocational and professional qualifications

6.4.1 Applicants holding vocational or professional qualifications may be admitted with specific credit to an appropriate point on a programme.

6.4.2 Applicants holding a Higher National Certificate or Diploma of BTEC, SCOTVEC or Edexcel may be considered for admission with specific credit. HND or HNC students should not be admitted to the third year of a degree course without satisfactorily completing assessments equivalent to those required for progression from the second to the third year of the degree course, or the equivalent stage of a part-time course.

6.5 Overseas awards

6.5.1 An award gained overseas may be judged acceptable for entry with specific credit.

E1.7 Discrimination

7.1 Applicants seeking admission to any of the University's courses will not be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability or marital status. The University will, however, seek to encourage applicants from particular groups where appropriate and desirable in order to ensure a balance of entrants in line with national, regional and university policies.

E1.8 Applicants with Disabilities

8.1 The University will give full and fair consideration to applicants with disabilities. It will ensure that promotional material about courses and programmes include positive written information about students with disabilities in line with the Policy on Equal Opportunities for Students (E12.). It is recognised that for applicants with disabilities certain access restrictions may apply. Nevertheless, the University recognises that Government legislation requires educational institutions to make whatever reasonable adjustments are necessary in order to allow students with disabilities access to educational and
related services. The process of considering an applicant with disabilities, however, will be undertaken on the merits of the application. Once a provisional decision has been made the application will be returned to the Admissions Office for consideration by the Disability Advisor who shall assess whether the University is able to offer an acceptable level of support, determined by reference to the Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice for providers of post 16 education and related services.

E1.9 Communications

9.1 All formal written communications concerning any stage of the application process will be authorised by the Head of Admissions.

9.2 All other written communications sent by Faculties to applicants not specifically related to the application process will be sent to the Admissions Office in advance in order that the Admissions Office can liaise effectively with external organisations regarding the information being sent by the University.

9.3 All standard letters to full time undergraduate applicants applying through UCAS either from the Admissions Office or, where appropriate, from the Faculties relating to the intention to make an offer, will state clearly that the letter is not a formal offer of a place at the University.

9.4 All university publications concerning admission requirements and related processes must be in line with university policies and, specifically the Policy on Equal Opportunities for Students (E12. section 2.2) and be produced in liaison with the Admissions Office.

E1.10 Interviewing

10.1 The University does not have a policy of universal interviewing. It is within the jurisdiction of the Faculties to determine the merits or otherwise of interviewing applicants depending upon the specific needs of subjects.

10.2 Applicants who have attended an interview will receive a decision within two working weeks of the interview.

E1.11 Changes to programmes

11.1 Changes to academic programmes involving significant restructuring or discontinuation will be communicated to applicants affected by such changes by letter. The Admissions Office will be responsible for co-ordinating the process of communicating with applicants affected by changes to programmes and will ensure that appropriate levels of advice and support are also notified.

E1.12 Enrolment and induction

12.1 The University will ensure that all successful applicants are provided with full and detailed information concerning enrolment and induction. Information will address operational matters such as enrolment attendance sessions as well as induction into the
subject area and learning resources. Attention must be paid to the needs of students with disabilities during the enrolment and induction process.

E1.13 Complaints

13.1 All complaints received from applicants, schools or other agencies regarding the application process will be addressed individually. All areas of the University will forward complaints to the Head of Admissions in the first instance. The Head of Admissions will conduct an investigation into the complaint and respond accordingly. Where applicants are not satisfied with the outcomes of this investigation the complaint will be referred to the Academic Registrar.

E1.14 Monitoring and Review

14.1 The University Admissions Policy will be reviewed periodically in order to meet national and institutional requirements. The Policy will be reviewed by the Academic Registrar and the Academic Board will receive notification of proposed changes for consideration.