

Contextual Admissions Policy

The Contextual Admissions Policy forms part of the University's commitment to ensuring that all students with the potential to succeed at Oxford Brookes have equality of access. It is underpinned by guidance from the Office for Students (OfS) and takes into account sector evidence on how contextual admissions can positively impact in reducing the gaps in admissions between the least and most represented students.

1. Purpose of this document

- 1.1. This document sets out Oxford Brookes University's Contextual Admissions Policy.
- 1.2. It describes the principles and processes followed by the University for selecting and making reduced offers to new students using individual contextual data.
- 1.3. This Policy covers applications for all undergraduate Bachelor degrees and in all faculties of the University.
- 1.4. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Admission of Students Regulation A2.

2. Responsibility and monitoring

- 2.1. Approval and annual review of this policy is the responsibility of Academic Board, in line with the principles set out in the University's Access and Participation Plan 2020 – 2025.
- 2.2. This Policy takes note of good practice within the higher education sector and the good practice guides published by the OfS and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (or, following its closure, UCAS).
- 2.3. Enquiries relating to this policy should be addressed to the Head of Admissions Operations.

3. Use of contextual information

- 3.1. We will use a range of nationally available datasets to inform this policy. A number of contextual factors will be considered when assessing applications that will help us to identify applicants who may not have reached their potential due to personal disadvantage or prior education circumstances. The criteria used to assess context is designed to account for the individual as best as is possible using the data sets available at the time of application.
- 3.2. We will apply a triangulated approach with the data available, as considered best practice by SPA/UCAS and designed to guard against false positives¹.

¹ For 2021, information provided by applicants in the UCAS management system will be used. This will include students who declare parenting responsibilities, caring responsibilities, and estrangement.

4. What contextual information is used

4.1. Individual flag

A contextual offer will be made to UK/Home applicants meeting any **one** of the following widening participation criteria:

- 1) The applicant successfully completed year one of the University's Brookes Engage outreach programme²
- 2) The applicant has lived in local authority care for any period prior to application³
- 3) The applicant's residential status is 'Refugee' or 'Humanitarian protection or similar'⁴.

4.2. Combined flag

A contextual offer will be made to UK/Home applicants meeting flags 1 **and** 2 or 3.

- 1) The applicant completed their Key Stage 4 qualifications at a school where average performance of students at Key Stage 4 Level was below the national average and/or the applicant completed their Key Stage 5 qualifications at a school/college where performance at Key Stage 5 falls within the bottom 40%⁵
- 2) The applicant lives in an area of low higher education participation as defined by the OfS⁶
- 3) The applicant lives in an area of high socio-economic deprivation as defined by the OfS.

5. How it is applied

5.1. Each course will have a published contextual offer which will reflect a reduction on the standard offer. Admissions officers and other selecting staff will use the tariff reduction as indicative and apply it based on the individual qualifications studied.

5.2. Where possible, the reduction in tariff will be applied to include any required subjects of study.

5.3. An indication of typical contextual offers is set out in the table below:

² Brookes Engage: minimum attendance of 70% including the summer school (to be counted as three sessions). Participants will be flagged by CRM and attendance will be verified by the Head of UK Recruitment and Widening Participation.

From 2021 entry eligibility will be extended to include participation in a new national outreach programme.

³ The applicant will need to declare that they are a care leaver on their UCAS application form. Advice and guidance on how to complete the application form will be included on the Admissions/How to Apply pages of the website. UCAS also provides a guide: <https://www.ucas.com/file/37276/download?token=-o8W4U-c>
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/care-leavers-and-looked-after-children/>

⁴ Definitions from UCAS 2020.

⁵ Institutions using similar school & college performance metrics: Kent, Warwick, Southampton, Edinburgh. Good practice would be to provide a link to a list of qualifying schools and colleges on the website. UCAS guide <https://www.ucas.com/file/94051/download?token=N7E5d78V>

⁶ For the 2020-21 application cycle this is defined as living in a Polar V4, quintile 1 or 2 postcode and or an IMD quintile 1 or 2 postcode.

Current entry requirements		Contextual offer	
Tariff	Equiv qualifications required	Tariff	Equiv qualifications required
136	AAB at A level DDD BTEC	112	BBC at A level D*D*/DMM BTEC
128	ABB at A level DDM BTEC	104	BCC at A level D*D*/DMM BTEC
120	BBB at A level DDM BTEC	96	CCC at A level DD or MMM BTEC
112	BBC at A level D*D*/DMM BTEC	88	CCD at A level DD or MMM BTEC
104	BCC at A level D*D*/DMM BTEC	88	CCD at A level DD or MMM BTEC
96	CCC at A level DD or MMM BTEC	88	CCD at A level DD or MMM BTEC

5.4. Students will be required to meet any other minimum entry requirements for the course including GCSEs, work experience etc. Where there is an externally applied minimum entry tariff, for healthcare courses for example, this will be made clear on the subject specific page.

5.5. In addition to the above, care leavers predicted to achieve at least the contextual offer tariff will receive an unconditional offer. This will form part of our wider offer to support transition of care leavers, which includes guaranteed accommodation in Halls of Residence for 52 weeks of the year.

6. Assessment of applications

6.1. Every assessment of an application will look at the contextual information and assign an individual and/or combined flag as applicable. Even if students are predicted to meet the standard entry requirements for their course, they will receive a contextual offer if they meet the contextual eligibility criteria.

6.2. Contextual data is used as part of the overall consideration of an applicant and not in isolation. The criteria set out in section 4 are operated within a context of a wider admissions policy which seeks to arrive at a holistic assessment of each applicant's potential for the programme for which they have applied. Contextual data informs but does not over-rule the process of professional judgement which ultimately decides whether an offer is made.

7. Appeals and complaints

7.1. The complaints process for applicants set out in the University Regulations applies.

For further information about this policy, please contact

Approved:

Updated: