

REGULATIONS

A2 Admission of Students

A2.1 Principles of Admission

A2.1.1 General considerations

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.
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. It is convenient for common alternatives to be specified at the same time.
3. In considering individual applicants for admission to a programme of studies, the University will seek evidence of personal, professional and educational experiences that provide indications of ability to meet the demands of the programme.
4. The University adheres to the principle of equality of opportunity for applicants of equal potential.
5. The University reserves the right to take into account a student's prior registration or enrolment on a course at the University or delivered by a partner when considering a new application for admission. In particular:
 - Any applicant who has previously been a student at the University and been required to withdraw for academic reasons (including leaving with an exit award) is not eligible to apply for re-admission as a student to any further course at the University or delivered by any of its partners until after a period of at least one academic year has elapsed.
 - Any applicant who has previously been a student at the University and been required to withdraw for disciplinary reasons is not eligible to apply for re-admission as a student under any circumstances unless specifically approved for re-admission by the Academic Registrar.

A2.1.2 Admission with academic credit

1. 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 (but see 4 below).
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. Course 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.
5. 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 memorandum of co-operation to be approved.
6. The possibilities of multiple entry and exit points should be considered as part of course validation and review and the course regulations formulated accordingly.

A2.1.3 The Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

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

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.
2. The learning derived from experience must be identified in order to be assessed.
3. The identification of prior learning comes through systematic reflection on experience, the writing of clear statements about what was actually learned and the collection and collation of evidence to support those statements.
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.
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. 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.

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.

Approved by:

Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 27th June 2012
Academic Board 18th July 2012

Updated:

Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 30th October 2013 (section 2.1.1)

A2.2 Admission to Programmes of Study at First Degree Level

A2.2.1 Programmes at first degree level

1. The standards of awards at first degree level in section A1.2 are defined with reference to minimum entry requirements expressed in terms of GCSE and A level passes or their equivalent. It should be noted that a course may be designed to be longer than the standard length, starting from lower entry qualifications, or shorter, based on a higher level of attainment of entry. Individual applicants may be admitted on the basis of a wide range of qualifications, experience or both, provided the principle of admission at A2.1 above is met. Some examples are given below, but the list is not intended to be exhaustive.
2. The minimum level of attainment required for entry to the start of programmes of the minimum length leading to awards at first degree level is equivalent to passes in two subjects at Advanced level supported by passes in three other subjects at GCSE. (A pass in GCSE means grade C or above, this is equivalent to a pass at grade C or above in GCE O-level or a pass at grade 1 in CSE).
3. In some fields of study it will be necessary for entrants to have reached the equivalent of A level in at least one specific subject, in others the emphasis will be on the general intellectual skills developed by previous study. In both cases, a variety of forms of preparation can provide evidence of an applicant's potential to succeed in a course of higher education.

A2.2.2 Alternative qualifications and experience

1. GCE and related qualifications

- a. Prospective entrants may offer other acceptable patterns of GCE A-level/O-level/GCSE/CSE grade 1 passes for example four subjects which three are at Advanced level.
- b. The normal level entry holders Scottish Certificate Education is five higher or passes in all with others Ordinary grade or Standard grade.
- c. Two Advanced Supplementary (A) passes are equivalent to an A-level pass; four AS passes may be offered in lieu of two A level passes. Applicants should not be required to offer more than five different subjects in all at A level, AS and GCSE.

2. Vocational and professional qualifications

A variety of vocational or professional qualifications may be acceptable for entry purposes. These include:

- a. Awards of the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) (formerly BEC and TEC), whose National Certificate/Diploma is generally regarded as equivalent to A level for entry purposes.
- b. Awards of the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC) (formerly SCOTBEC and SCOTEC), which is operating a new modular Scottish National Certificate scheme.
- c. Awards of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ), whose Advanced GNVQ (level 3) is generally regarded as equivalent to A level for entry purposes.

3. Other qualifications

Some applicants may have successfully completed other courses which demonstrate equivalent attainments and abilities, for example:

- a. Open University courses Foundation Credits.
- b. Access courses approved by an Authorised Validating Agency and specially designed to encourage adults to return to study and to provide a preparation for courses in higher education.
- c. A full-time foundation course in Art and Design of not less than one year's duration normally together with the equivalent of five GCSE or GCE O-level passes or four GCSE or GCE O-level passes including one at A level.

4. International and overseas qualifications

- a. The International Baccalaureate and European Baccalaureate are acceptable as group qualifications satisfying general entrance requirements.
- b. Irish and other overseas qualifications may be offered.

In addition, applicants holding overseas qualifications will be required to satisfy the University's requirements as to English Language proficiency.

5. Other learning and experience

Profiles or Records of Achievement may or may not be associated with formal qualifications, for example the TVEI experience, vocational or professional experience, assessed prior or experiential learning. The University regards these as useful guides to the suitability of an applicant for admission.

A2.3 Admission to Postgraduate and Post-Experience Programmes

A2.3.1 Postgraduate Diploma and Masters' courses

The normal entry requirement for a Postgraduate Diploma or Masters course is a degree or Honours degree as appropriate or a postgraduate diploma or a professional qualification recognised as being equivalent to a degree or Honours degree. Other qualifications or experiences which demonstrate that a candidate possesses appropriate knowledge and skills at Honours degree standard may be acceptable.

A2.3.2 Other qualifications

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

A2.4 Policy on the Use of Contextual Data in Admissions

The University makes use of the contextual data provided by UCAS in relation to applicants through that scheme. The University employs the contextual data provided by UCAS specifically to improve inclusivity, by recognising potential assessed using evidence-based criteria.

The intention of the use of the UCAS contextual data is to provide fairness and equality of opportunity to all applicants by ensuring that adequate steps are taken to address differences between applicants, including differences in their experience of educational opportunities. A level of performance which is exceptional in its context may indicate outstanding ability, motivation and potential, and we will take this into account when assessing the varying performance of candidates. This data will never be used to the disadvantage of an individual applicant but may be used in the limited circumstances described below to vary our typical offers.

The following principles and statements of intent apply to the use of contextual data in the admissions process:

1. All data is applied individually to each applicant ensuring thereby that they are considered on their own merit, and not as part of a wider group.
2. There are no quotas for recruiting students from any particular background. (The University does have agreed milestones with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) for the recruitment, retention and performance of students from a range of backgrounds but these are not employed as quotas in the admissions process.)
3. The data is used only to complement and enhance existing selection mechanisms, including the consideration of academic qualifications, and not to replace these methods.
4. Contextual data is used as part of the overall consideration of an applicant and not in isolation; a combination of various items of contextual data are used in order to arrive at an holistic assessment of the 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.

5. All admissions staff using contextual data in decision making are briefed fully and made aware of the issues surrounding contextual data to ensure that they understand, and can interpret and use the data appropriately.
6. We rigorously monitor our use of contextual data.

The use of contextual data does not result in either an automatic offer of a place or a lower offer to a candidate. Where the holistic assessment of an individual candidate, through the evidence of the contextual data, indicates that differential treatment is justified, due to the evidence provided by that data, then the University may respond in two ways.

1. A lower offer than the advertised lowest typical offer may be issued to the candidate. In such circumstances, the offer will not be no more than one grade at A level lower in up to two separate A levels (or equivalent in other qualifications). For example, if the advertised lowest typical offer is AAB at A level, then an offer no lower than BBB or ABC may be issued.
2. Where a candidate does not meet the level of academic achievement normally expected of successful candidates, then an offer may be issued to a candidate at the advertised lowest typical offer where they otherwise might have been unsuccessful in their application. This will only apply to candidates whose achievement is no lower one grade at A level lower in up to two separate A levels (or equivalent in other subjects).

The University will keep its policy for the use of contextual data under review and up-date this policy statement when changes are agreed. In doing so, the University will refer to relevant external reference points such as the SPA Principles on the Use of Contextual Data in Admissions.

Matthew Andrews, Academic Registrar, June 2011

Approved by:

Academic Board, 13 July 2011

A2.5 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

A2.5.1 Credit Accumulation and Transfer

Definitions

Credit accumulation is the process of achieving credits over time in relation to a planned programme of study.

Credit transfer is a mechanism which allows credit awarded by a higher education awarding body to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by another higher education provider and/or between programmes offered by a higher education provider.

Appropriate learning

At the time of the development of the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS), the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) articulated the principle that “appropriate learning, wherever it occurs... may be recognised for academic credit”. This principle, together with the introduction of CATS in the early 1990s, made it possible for universities to set a value for both extra-mural learning and individually-negotiated programmes of study.

Academic credit should therefore only be given for ‘appropriate learning’, i.e. learning that is consistent with the CNAA’s principle that programmes of study “must stimulate an enquiring, analytical and creative approach; encouraging independent judgement and critical self-awareness” – a principle that is echoed in Brookes’ own educational ethos. The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), level descriptors, and relevant subject benchmark statements are key reference points now used to judge the appropriateness of learning.

Key reference points

Oxford Brookes University’s approach to APL is informed by:

University Regulations/A Core Regulations/A2 Admission of Students

- [UK Quality Code Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards](#)
- [UK Quality Code Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning](#)

These procedures are intended to promote the use of APL and to ensure cross-institutional consistency in the award of credit for prior learning. See also the Open Award regulations in section B3.

A2.5.2 The award of credit for prior learning

Definitions

The accreditation of prior learning (APL) refers to the identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of prior learning which has taken place outside the University. This may be certificated learning (APCL), for which a student has already followed a prescribed programme of study leading to a specified academic award; or experiential learning (APEL), where learning which has taken place outside formal education or training systems (often in the workplace) is assessed and recognised for academic purposes.

Principles

Credit is awarded for learning, and students must therefore provide evidence of their learning, either through the submission of the required assessment/s for a module or programme of study taken at Brookes, production of an award certificate, or other evidence of learning where it has taken place outside formal educational settings.

The credit assigned to prior learning may be used for admission with advanced standing onto an Oxford Brookes programme, or for exemption from an element or elements within the programme. The University seeks to ensure that applicants are awarded the maximum amount of relevant credit to which they are entitled by virtue of their prior achievements, subject to a maximum limit of two-thirds of the total credit required for the award. The two-thirds limit also applies to any interim exit award.

A student transferring credit towards an award shall have the class of degree or distinction determined either by the average of the marks on the minimum number of acceptable module credits that must be passed by study on a Brookes programme or, if marks as well as credits are transferred i.e. from previous study on a Brookes course or by specific arrangements with another institution which will be detailed in individual programme regulations, by the average of any marks on the modules credited together with those on the modules specified above.

APL may be used:

- to award credit in part-fulfilment of a programme requirements at the point of entry (direct entry or entry with advanced standing);
- to enable transfer between programmes of study, with the credit from the first programme being used in part-fulfilment of the newly entered programme's requirements;
- post entry, with credit awarded in part fulfilment of the requirements of the programme.

Learning outcomes and learning equivalence

All learning can be expressed in terms of credit values but not all credit will necessarily be accumulated towards a specific programme or award - this will depend on the relevance of the learning to the academic and professional requirements of the programme. Credit may be described as:

- *General credit*: academic credit attached to an individual's learning, in recognition of assessed learning at a specified level, without being considered in relation to a particular programme of study.
- *Specific credit*: the proportion of general credit which represents learning that is directly relevant to an individual student's proposed programme of study. When general credit is recognised through a higher education institution's admissions procedure as directly contributing to a particular programme, it becomes specific.

Prior learning achievements must be equivalent to the learning outcomes of the programme or module against which credit is sought. A student must demonstrate through the admissions process that the credit they have previously been awarded is directly relevant to the intended learning outcomes of the programme to which they wish to gain entry or the module/s from which they wish to gain exemption.

University Regulations/A Core Regulations/A2 Admission of Students

A2.5.3 Admission with advanced standing

Where advanced standing is sought in respect of one or more specific modules, prior learning achievements should relate directly to the learning outcomes of the modules. Credit for prior learning can only be awarded in respect of whole modules. When assessing a claim against a whole stage of a programme, prior learning should be mapped directly to the level/interim stage learning outcomes as stated in the programme specification. If interim stage learning outcomes are not stated, reference should be made to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

Applicants for admission with advanced standing may be admitted to any point of a programme consistent with the level and volume of credit awarded for prior learning. However, to be eligible for an award, a maximum of two thirds of the required total credit for the award may be awarded through APL. This eligibility requirement does not apply to students who have successfully completed the Oxford Brookes and HKMA GDL programmes and wish to complete an LLB (Hons) degree.

An overseas qualification may be judged acceptable for entry with specific credit, subject to reference to NARIC, to the relevant overseas qualifications framework, and to the FHEQ. Entry with advanced standing may also be granted through an articulation agreement with a partner organisation (approved through the appropriate process as set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook), in which students successfully completing an identified programme at the partner are guaranteed entry at a later stage of a specified Brookes programme.

Subject Coordinators are responsible for assessing claims for APL, and the results of the assessment should be recorded on the relevant form (contact Student Central for advice on applications for APL), and submitted for approval. The authority for verifying decisions and approving the award of credit for prior learning lies with Examination Committees, in consultation with the external examiner/s.

Students awarded exemption from aspects of the programme through APL should be provided with information about how their final award classification will be calculated if it will differ from the standard calculation. Credits awarded through APL should be recorded on the transcript.

A2.5.4 Direct Entry

Holders of some professional and other vocational awards such as HNC/Ds are permitted direct entry to a later stage of (or exemptions from elements of) individual programmes. Acceptable vocational and professional qualifications for direct entry to individual programmes, and any progression requirements, should be stated in the entry requirements for the programme and approved through the validation process.

Students admitted to a programme in one of the later stages, having completed the equivalent of the earlier stages on a different programme, should be recorded as exempt from the earlier stages to indicate that the credit requirements have been met.

The rules governing the calculation of award classifications for direct entry students must be set out in the programme or award scheme regulations.

A2.5.5 Transfer between Programmes of Study

Students may transfer from one approved programme to another within the University at the discretion of the Subject Coordinator responsible for the admitting course.

Applicants who have successfully completed the whole or part of a programme of study at another UK higher education institution may be admitted with credit at an appropriate point on an approved programme of the University, at the discretion of the Programme Lead for the admitting course.

A2.5.6 Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

Definition

University Regulations/A Core Regulations/A2 Admission of Students

Prior experiential learning is uncertificated learning which has taken place outside formal educational settings, such as in the workplace. The following principles should be taken into consideration when considering the desirability of embarking on a claim for APEL.

Principles

Where applicants' prior un-certificated learning, including experience and industrial training, can be assessed with sufficient accuracy it may be used to give entry to an Oxford Brookes programme with specific credit.

APEL is not concerned with accrediting the applicant's experience per se, but with assessing and quantifying the learning that has taken place through that experience. Evidence is required - usually in the form of a portfolio of evidence and a reflective statement - to enable the assessment of the learning for which credit is being claimed.

The number of credits allocated to a portfolio submitted in a claim for APEL should be calculated on the basis of the notional effort involved in achieving the learning outcomes. In the context of a formal programme of study where a prescribed curriculum is delivered by the University, one credit equates to ten notional learning hours, hence a 10 credit module involves around 100 hours of learning. In the context of experiential learning, four hours experience roughly equates to one hour of learning; therefore, for each 10 credits awarded, an applicant will have undertaken around 400 hours of experience.

Credit for prior learning can only be awarded in respect of whole modules: potential claimants should therefore be advised against presenting an application for APEL unless they have sufficient experience to claim at least one module's worth of credit, which will involve drawing on a significant amount of relevant experience.

Claims for APEL must be assessed against intended learning outcomes of the programme or module against which the credit will be claimed. The Open Award framework (section B3 in the Specific Regulations) may also be used to deal with individual claims for APEL.

Faculties should have clear procedures in place for assessing APEL claims. Clear information must be available to staff and students about:

- who is responsible for collecting and presenting the evidence of learning,
- what format the evidence should take,
- what advice and support will be provided by the University for claimants in preparing the portfolio,
- by whom and how the claim will be assessed,
- which Examination Committee will consider the claim for approval,
- how the APEL will be recorded on the transcript, and
- how award classifications will be calculated.

The cost of processing claims for APEL can be high because of the complexity and the time involved, for both University staff and claimants, in putting together the portfolio of evidence, advising and supporting applicants, and assessing the claims; and applicants should be advised of this prior to embarking on the process.

A2.5.7 Exemptions from programme element of industrial experience and training, supervised work experience, and study abroad

An applicant may be judged to have satisfied, wholly or in part, the learning outcomes of a period of supervised work experience which forms part of a programme of study, on the basis of their prior training or experience. In assessing such applications, Programme Leads should consider:

- the quality of the prior training or work experience, and its supervision and assessment;
- the relevance of the prior training or supervised work experience to the learning outcomes of the element of the programme for which the student wishes to gain exemption;
- whether the award of credit for prior learning in respect of, or exemption from aspects of, the work or practice placement concerned will compromise the student's ability to fulfil any professional or other statutory requirements which the supervised work experience element is designed to meet.

In cases of sandwich programmes, any credit awarded for prior learning, or exemptions given for prior experience, is subject to a maximum of 50% of the credit assigned to, or period of, the placement element of the course.

On entry to a course with a requirement for a period of study abroad, a student may be exempted from that requirement, and the course correspondingly shortened, if the student is able to demonstrate that they have already achieved the learning outcomes for the study abroad element of the course by virtue of relevant prior learning and experience at the appropriate level.

Approved by:

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Academic Board, 18th July 2012

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For further information about these regulations, please contact the Head of Admissions.