

Admissions policy

Purpose and scope

1. Birkbeck, University of London (hereafter abbreviated to 'the College') aims, through the procedures which it uses to assess applications and offer places, for its admissions decisions to be easily understood by candidates: fair; transparent; and based on principles that are applied consistently across the College.
2. The College acknowledges that admissions procedures will vary to some extent across subject areas. For example, in addition to academic ability, admissions decisions may also be based on practical ability.
3. This policy applies to all programmes of study offered by the College as defined by the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study and Regulations for Research Degrees.
4. For the purposes of this Policy, an applicant is defined as any person who has submitted an application to study at the College and has not yet enrolled as a student.
5. An offer of admission is assessed independently of any application for funding.

Roles and responsibilities

6. Admissions decisions are formally the responsibility of the Executive Dean. Executive Deans will normally delegate decision making to admissions tutors or programme directors, referring matters up to the Executive Dean as appropriate.
7. It is the responsibility of the Executive Dean of each School to appoint Admissions Tutors and/or Programme Directors, and to ensure they are in a position to understand and support the College's Admissions Policy; are competent to make sound and fair judgements; are appropriately trained; and have sufficient resources and time to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
8. The Executive Dean may nominate an appropriate member of staff to execute the appointment of Admissions Tutors and/or Programme Directors.

Tuition fees

9. Information about the tuition fees charged for a programme can be found on the relevant programme page on the College's website.
Further information about tuition fees can be found in the College's Fees policy.
10. As part of the Admissions process, applicants will have their fee status assessed to determine the fee they will be charged. Further information about this can be found in the College's [Fee Assessment Policy](#).

Applicants with disabilities

11. Consideration of applications from applicants who declare a disability is based on the same criteria and principles as for other applicants. A decision may need to take into account any overriding health and safety concerns, barriers relating to professional requirements, or the College's ability or inability to make any necessary adjustments. Such cases will be addressed on an individual basis.
Applicants are encouraged to disclose any disability to the College, to enable any necessary adjustments to be planned in support of their education. Failure to do so may impact on the College's ability to make any necessary reasonable adjustments.

Applicants under 18 years of age

12. Admission of students under 18 years of age must be carried out in line with the College's Policy on Admission of Students Under the Age of 18 Years.

Applicants with criminal convictions

13. Applications from applicants with criminal convictions will be considered in line with the [Criminal Convictions Policy](#)

Entry requirements

14. The College's website and printed publications will make available clear information on admissions criteria for each programme. The College will publish on its website advice to applicants on what the College is looking for in personal statements or research proposals; and to referees on the elements that are helpful in a reference.

15. The College requires all Schools to publish entry requirements for each programme, in the College prospectus and online programme information.
16. Additionally, Schools must publish information on:
 - a. The specific criteria against which they assess applicants;
 - b. An indication of how different criteria will be weighted;
 - c. The process for considering forms and assessing candidates;
 - d. Arrangements for cross-Faculty or cross-School admissions.
17. Executive Deans or their delegated officers may set minimum entry requirements and may insist on specific criteria; for instance, a minimum grade achieved at examination in a particular subject and/or at a particular level may be specified as a criterion. For research students, admission is dependent on availability of an appropriate supervisor.
18. College-level guidance on the equivalencies of non-UK qualifications is published on the website and maintained by Registry and External Relations.

Consideration of application

19. Initial consideration for admission will be based on information supplied to the College in each applicant's application form. Admissions tutors may require additional information to be supplied before making any decision.
20. Admissions staff use academic judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual applicants; offers of admission should be based on a judgement as to the applicant's likelihood to succeed in completing the programme applied for within the prescribed length of study. In exercising their judgement, admissions staff must operate in a way that is consistent with this Policy.
21. Decisions on admission to programmes of the College, other than top-up degrees, will be taken before any decision on the accreditation of prior learning (for taught students) or admission with exemption of part of the programme of study (for research students) is made by an Admissions Tutor. College policy on the accreditation of prior learning for taught students is defined in the [Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy](#).
22. Programme staff may interview applicants, subject to clearly explaining why and how the interview will be used in assessing the applicant. All applicants must be

treated on an equal and fair basis, and any interview and decision-making must be consistent with the 2010 Equality Act.

23. In general, the College does not require applicants to provide supplementary written work for Taught programmes but may do so for Research programmes. Applicants may be asked for an example of their work, or set a written task, subject to a clear explanation of why and how this will be used in assessing the applicant.
24. In general, the College does not require applicants to undertake further tests, other than, in certain circumstances, English language tests (see paragraph 23). Applicants may be set an additional test, subject to a clear explanation of why and how this will be used in assessing the applicant, and to treating all applicants on an equal and fair basis, as for interviews.
25. Executive Deans or their delegated officer must be confident that the applicant has the proficiency in the English language necessary to succeed in the chosen course or programme. Applicants may be required to take an IELTS or similar test; an appropriate standard requirement for performance will be set in this test.
26. The information which may be considered when assessing an application, in addition to educational qualifications, may include, but is not limited, to:
 - a. References, academic or otherwise
 - b. Personal Statement
 - c. Professional Qualifications
 - d. Relevant Work Experience
 - e. Research proposal
 - f. For Research Students: Supervisory and other support required, including material/financial support required for the proposed research
27. The College will not admit applicants on the strength of information believed to be either fraudulent or plagiarised and reserves the right to reject or cancel an application or offer under these circumstances.
28. Applicants who require Student visa sponsorship will be subject to additional assessments to ensure that only genuine and credible students study at the College. The College reserves the right to reject or cancel an application or offer if an applicant fails these assessments or is otherwise judged to pose a risk to the

institutional Student visa Sponsor Licence.

29. Applicants who have applied previously will still be required to submit a new application. Direct applicants who applied in the previous 5 years should declare this in the Personal Statement of their new application. Applicants are not normally admitted to the same programme of study for which they have previously completed the award.

Conditional offer of study

30. Conditional offers made must normally be in line with published entry requirements and should not normally vary substantially from these. Applicants who fulfil the conditions required by any conditional offer will have their place confirmed as soon as possible once the College has been notified of the fulfilment of any condition.

Referral to alternative programme

31. If an offer of study is not made, admissions tutors will refer applicants to a suitable alternative programme in the College where possible. In some instances, where previously agreed between programmes, Executive Deans, or their delegated officer(s) may make offers for programmes other than the one applied for.

Applicants to whom no offer is made

32. The College reserves the right to reject applicants to its programmes for any lawful reason where it considers it is in its interests to do so. The College publishes its terms and conditions of study online: [Terms and Conditions of Study](#).
33. The College will correspond about a decision with the candidate. There is no right of appeal, and the decision will not be reviewed (although feedback may be provided at the discretion of the Executive Dean or their delegated officer(s)). However, concerns that the College's Admissions Policy has been incorrectly implemented may be investigated under the [Student Complaints Policy](#), at the discretion of the College.

Student visas

34. The College recognises that as a Student visa Sponsor, it is required to identify both the intent and ability of applicants who need a Student visa to study in the UK. The College uses a combination of controls as described above, as well as additional checks which include previous UK immigration history, confirmation of academic progress, accreditation of previous education institutions, and credibility interviews. Together these checks ensure that only applicants who both come to the UK for the purpose of study and have the ability to complete their intended programme are offered Student visa sponsorship.
35. As part of the College's efforts to ensure that only genuine and credible students obtain Student visa sponsorship, applicants are required to pay a non-refundable deposit. Payment of the deposit confirms the applicant's acceptance of our Terms and Conditions for Student Visa Deposit.
36. As part of the College's Student visa Sponsor Licence, the College is required to view and maintain copies of the passport and visa (valid for study at the College) for all students with Student visas. We also reserve the right to check original qualification documents (including certified translations if these are not in English) that were used to obtain admission to the College.
37. Should the College decide that an applicant will not meet the Student visa requirements, or that the applicant poses a risk to the College's Student visa Sponsor Licence, the College reserves the right to refuse admission by withdrawing the application or revoking an offer.
38. Applicants applying for certain science, engineering or technology programmes may need to apply for an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before applying for a Visa, Entry Clearance or Extension of Stay.

Academic Board, May 2024