

## **UNDERGRADUTE ADMISSIONS POLICY for University of arts London Awards**

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## **UNIVERSITY CENTRE SOUTH ESSEX**

### **UNDERGRADUTE ADMISSIONS POLICY**

*This policy applies to admission in the academic year 2023/24*

#### **SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy applies to all admissions to higher education programmes at any of the College's campuses ( Southend, Basildon, Thurrock, Grays, The Backstage Centre, Purfleet). It covers all stages of an applicant's interaction with the College from initial enquiry through application, receipt of the College's selection decision and the transition to first enrolment and induction for successful applicants.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY**

The Higher Education Admissions Policy is approved by the College's HE Education Executive Committee. Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the CMA Compliance Officer and the Director of HE Operations.

#### **REVIEW OF POLICY**

Monitoring and review of the Higher Education Admissions Policy is undertaken annually by the HE College Executive Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

#### **PRINCIPLES GOVERNING HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS**

The College recognises the value of diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity. It aims to provide an environment in which applicants are treated with dignity and respect and solely on the basis of their abilities, merits and potential.

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The College is committed to fair access and encourages applications from all students who are able to demonstrate the potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course and to benefit from study at undergraduate or postgraduate level. Individual applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction. The College's admissions policies and procedures are designed to ensure that all applications are considered fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards. The College's Higher Education Admissions Policy is intended to provide a policy and procedural framework within which admissions decision-making is characterised by transparency, fairness and consistency.

The College strives to comply with all relevant legislation in relation to its undergraduate and postgraduate admissions activity.

#### **SECTION 1 – MARKETING**

The College is committed to the provision of comprehensive, open and consistent messages in its marketing information, and to the management of activity which leads to the admission of students to the College in ways that are fair, clear and explicit and implemented consistently.

The College's marketing messages are promulgated through promotional materials and activities which we aim to ensure are accurate, relevant, current, and accessible in order to provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.

Marketing activities include:

- participation at education exhibitions
- collaboration with partner institutions
- on-campus Open and Visit Days
- regular communications with applicants during the admissions process

Marketing information is communicated via a number of different media and includes:

- Printed prospectus
- UCAS Website ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com))
- The College website ([South Essex College](http://South Essex College))
- Social and new media
- Print and Digital advertising campaigns
- Pre-enrolment webpages
- Documentation sent to applicants throughout the process

Marketing and admissions staff maintain a strong working relationship in order to ensure a holistic approach that is informed by the principles set out in the Undergraduate Admissions Policy.

Marketing and Student Recruitment also ensure that communications with applicants and enquirers adheres to CMA (Competition and Markets Authority), GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations) legislation.

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## **SECTION 2 – EDUCATION OUTREACH**

The College fosters an inclusive and diverse environment for study, providing opportunities for study to individuals who are able to demonstrate the greatest potential to benefit from the type of education delivered at undergraduate and postgraduate level, regardless of their background.

The Student Services & Marketing teams are engaged in a range of activities targeted at students from groups that are under-represented in higher education, which aims to raise awareness, increase attainment and suitably prepare students for entering and undertaking study in higher education. Our pre-education outreach activity includes:

- information and advice in schools and colleges
- campus visits for students in primary and secondary education

- taster days
- summer schools
- individual mentoring

The College aims to deliver a cohesive approach to widening participation and fair access, which is expressed through its APP Plan, HE Strategy and the Higher Education Admissions Policy.

Marketing, Student Services and HE staff maintain a strong working relationship with appropriate representation at committees to ensure that the admissions policy, access and widening participation and HE Strategy are mutually informed and maintain a holistic approach to access.

Outreach activity is informed in part by the principles set out in the Higher Education Admissions Policy.

### **SECTION 3 - ADMISSIONS**

The College operates a centralised undergraduate admissions function for all applications received via the [UCAS Website](#) (full time & part time applications). Applications are processed by a specialised HE Admissions team who act as the principal contact for applicants throughout the admissions process. However, selection decisions are made by admissions selectors, who may be members of the academic staff or members of the central HE Admissions team.

The Undergraduate Admissions Office is responsible for approving the offer and any conditions. A formal offer letter and the University's Terms and Conditions are communicated to applicants at the initial offer stage.

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF APPLICANTS IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS**

Applicants are expected to:

- provide complete and honest information in applications submitted to the College
- respond in a timely manner to requests for further information from the College
- communicate any changes to the information originally supplied in their application as soon as possible
- be courteous and respectful in their communications with College staff involved in admissions.

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

### **1. Academic requirements**

All higher education applicants are required to meet the College's published entry requirements<sup>4</sup>. Course-specific entry requirements are published annually in the HE prospectus and on the College website and via the UCAS Website. Entry requirements are reviewed annually and are determined by departments following consultation with the Dean of Higher Education. Entry requirements may include specific subjects and attainment at GCSE and A level or equivalent.

### **2. English language competence**

All undergraduate applicants are required to achieve the equivalent of grade C/4 or above in GCSE English

Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not been educated in an English-speaking environment (country and/or institution) are required to achieve a minimum overall score of IELTS 7.0 in each band or equivalent.

The College accepts a range of English language qualifications as being equivalent to IELTS and these are published on the webpage for each course.

<https://www.southessex.ac.uk/higher-education/entry-requirements>

### **3. Publication of entry requirements**

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.southessex.ac.uk/he/ucse-courses>

Entry requirements are normally determined around two years before the proposed point of admission, e.g. by January 2021 for September 2023 entry, and are published in the printed prospectus. The College reserves the right to amend its entry requirements (subject to approval by its validating institution) up to 12 months before the proposed point of admission. Amended entry requirements will be published on the College and UCAS website.

#### **4. Acceptable qualifications**

The College accepts a wide range of qualifications from UK applicants, including A level, International Baccalaureate, BTEC qualifications, Level 3 Advanced Diplomas, Access to HE Diploma courses (approved by the Quality Assurance Agency), Open University qualifications and a range of professional qualifications..

EU and other international qualifications are also accepted. The equivalence of such qualifications to a Level 3 UK award will be evaluated in accordance with independent national guidance provided by UK NARIC, UCAS and other recognised sources.

For courses with subject specific entry requirements at GCSE level, a wider range of equivalent qualifications are also accepted, including components from high school qualifications from outside of the UK. The Director of HE Operations has overall responsibility for undertaking such evaluations in consultation with the HE Admissions Manager, and the UAL Programme Partnerships Manager.

#### **5. Verification of qualifications**

The University will normally verify the result of any qualification that is not received from UCAS either directly, or via the Awarding Bodies Linkage (ABL). If the University has not received results from UCAS, applicants will be required to submit evidence of results of their admitting academic qualifications and their English language test/qualification (if applicable), before they are permitted to register at the University. Information and guidance on qualification verification is sent to applicants at both the initial offer and at the confirmation stage of the admissions cycle. Applicants will be required to submit evidence of results before they are permitted to enrol at the College.

### **SELECTION**

#### **6. Assessment of Applications & Initial checks**

All applications are subject to an initial check on receipt by the HE Admissions team. The initial check will identify applications which require specific attention (see section on *Consideration of Additional Data in Selection and Offer-Making*, paragraphs 16 to 26 below), in order to ensure that they are dealt with in accordance with relevant procedures. On completion of the initial checks most applications will be submitted to the Admissions Selector, who will make the selection decision.

#### **7. Applications from individuals who do not meet the General Entrance**

Requirements may be rejected at the initial check stage. In borderline cases such applications will be referred to the Programme Partnership Manager for consideration. If the Programme Partnership Manager recommends that an offer should be made, the application will be approved by the Director of HE Operations, who is responsible for determining whether the General Entrance Requirements may be waived..

## **8. Selection decision**

In accordance with the College's commitment to fair admissions, each application is considered individually by HE Admissions, who will determine whether an offer should be made on the basis of academic achievements to date, predicted academic achievement and other evidence of the applicant's ability and potential to complete the course for which they have applied. This includes evidence of the applicant's motivation, skills, experience and attitude, as expressed in his/her personal statement and the academic reference.

HE Admissions may take into account any extenuating circumstances which have affected an individual applicant when deciding whether an offer should be made

All decisions (including those to turn down an applicant) are checked by staff in central Admissions team for consistency of applying the entry criteria and adhering to the Higher Education Admissions Policy.

## **9. Interviews, auditions and other evidence**

Some courses invite all applicants to attend an interview, audition or workshop, which provides an opportunity for applicants to meet one or more members of academic staff in order to provide a mutually beneficial assessment of their suitability for the course. Eligible applicants who are not invited to attend for an interview (for example because the interview period is over) or who are unable to attend, will receive equal consideration.

For all courses where interview/auditions are part of the entry criteria the Admissions will invite applicants to attend an interview (remotely or in person). However, the College reserves the right to reject applications from applicants who are invited to attend an interview and who do not respond to one, or exceptionally two, specific invitations to attend.

Applicants to HND Performing Arts and Top Up ( Dance/Acting) are required to undertake an audition, interview or workshop as part of the selection process.

Applicants to some courses are required to attend an interview and to complete specific tests in accordance with requirements published by the relevant professional body.

Applicants to specific courses may be required to provide a portfolio, attend an audition or provide other evidence of competence for assessment by the Admissions Selector. In some instances applicants may be required to submit a piece of work for consideration. Such requirements are set out in the College's prospectus, provided on the College website on respective entry profiles and will be communicated to relevant applicants directly by the central admissions team at the point of application.



Students will receive an offer only after the outcome of the Interview/auditions.

## **Student Transfer Policy**

Transferring is the process where by a current student at UCSE or at another institution, moves from one degree programme to another. This includes students transferring to UCSE from another institution and transferring between UCSE programmes. More information can be found through the student transfer policy [Transfer Policy | South Essex College](#)

## **OFFER-MAKING**

### **10. Communication of offer**

Where the College decides to make the applicant an offer, this is communicated to applicants via UCAS Track. The offer letter will set out any conditions that the applicant must meet. Applicants will receive an offer letter, 'Important information about your offer' Email and information on the College's Terms and Conditions.

### **11. Conditions of offer**

The offer letter sets out the specific entry requirements that the applicant must achieve in order for his/her place to be confirmed. The offer will be expressed in terms of UCAS Tariff Points or the equivalent for applicants who are taking alternative qualifications and GCSE maths and English requirements. Where appropriate the offer will include the English language requirement that the applicant must achieve in order for his/her place to be confirmed.

The College normally makes the Standard Conditional Offer (SCO) for the course. However, Admissions may make a different offer in individual cases, in accordance with the admissions criteria for the course applied for.

The offer letter may also set out non-academic conditions that the applicant must meet before admission to the course can be confirmed. These may include satisfactory completion of a Disclosure & Barring Service check (formerly Criminal Records Bureau check) and an occupational health check.

## **12. Unconditional Offers**

An offer of a place to an applicant who has already demonstrated achievement of both the academic and any English language entrance requirements, and has fulfilled all other requirements, will be unconditional. The applicant is not required to demonstrate any further achievement in order for their place to be confirmed at the College.

## **13. Applicants made an alternative offer**

In cases where the applicant is deemed unlikely to achieve the entry requirements for the course for which s/he has applied but where an alternative course is available, a 'change of course offer' may be made.

## **14. Tuition Fees**

The tuition fee for the first year of the course is included in the offer letter. Further information on tuition fees is provided in the documentation issued with the offer letter.

## **15. Deferred entry**

Applications for deferred entry are welcomed and will be given equal consideration with applications for entry in the current admissions cycle. Applicants requesting deferred entry must still be able to meet the academic and English language requirements for the course in the current admissions cycle and in the subsequent admissions cycle.

### **Unsuccessful applicants and feedback**

Where the College decides that an offer cannot be made, this is communicated to applicants via UCAS Track. Admissions Selectors are required to record the reason(s) for not making an offer in each individual case. Unsuccessful applicants have right to appeal or complain as stated in the Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy & Procedure Admissions Appeal and Complains Policy. Feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants on request to the CMA Compliance & Information Manager (HE) at [HEadmissions@southessex.ac.uk](mailto:HEadmissions@southessex.ac.uk) in line with the Higher Education Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy & Procedure<sup>6</sup>

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## **16. Discontinuation or suspension of courses**

The College reserves the right to discontinue or suspend a course for which offers have already been issued, but undertakes to do this in exceptional circumstances only. Where a course is discontinued, applicants holding offers

are informed as soon as possible, and where possible and appropriate, are offered a place on an alternative course offered by the College or alternatively supported by our Information Advice and Guidance team to secure a place elsewhere with another provider.

if appropriate. Where the title of a course is changed, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible of the change and given options for how they would like to proceed. Further information about changes or possible closures of courses is provided to applicants at the initial offer stage

## **CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA IN SELECTION AND OFFER-MAKING**

### **17. Applicants with disabilities**

Applicants who declare a disability in their application are referred to the College's Student Support team, which may issue advice and guidance or, where appropriate, make an assessment of the applicant's reasonable adjustment needs and what arrangements may be necessary to enable students to meet the course requirements. In individual cases Student Support may invite applicants for an interview to support the assessment process. The Student Support assessment of applications from students who declare a disability takes place independently of the academic selection process, which is based entirely on academic merit and takes place in accordance with standard policy.

Applicants who declare they are Care Leavers or Estranged from their family may also wish to contact HE Support for advice and guidance.

### **18. Mature applicants**

Applications from mature students, formally defined as students over the age of 21 at the start of the course, are welcomed and will be given equal consideration with all other applications.

### **19. Applicants who will be under 18 at the time of entry to the College**

In accordance with South Essex College regulations, applicants who will be under 18 at the time of entry will be required to comply with South Essex College's child protection procedures. Such applicants will be required to complete the relevant under 18s form satisfactorily, providing parental/guardian approval and details of a UK-based emergency contact who is over the age of 18, before their place is confirmed. Additional information about safeguarding can be found at [Safeguarding | South Essex College](#)

### **20. Applicants requesting re-admission**

Applicants who have previously withdrawn from study at the College, and who wish to be re-admitted, will be considered in accordance with the relevant awarding partner's policy where one exists.

## **21. Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning**

Applicants seeking recognition for prior or experiential learning are handled in accordance with the College's Procedure on AP(E)L. If the AP(E)L request is approved, the offer will note the volume of credit which has been accredited and the changes to the applicant's planned course structure which result from the approval. Applications for second year entry are submitted via UCAS considered in the normal way.

Further information on the University's policy and procedure for the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) can be found at [HE Policies and Procedures | South Essex College](#)

## **22. Applicants admitted under specific education outreach programmes**

The College may admit applicants under specific programmes designed to encourage applications from students who have experienced educational disadvantage. Such programmes include specification of additional consideration that may be given to applicants during the admissions process.

## **23. Assessment of applicant fee status**

Applicants are required to declare their fee status when they complete their application, selecting from a number of options including UK home, EU or overseas (non-EU) fee status. The central Admissions team check information in the application relating to fee status, including the nationality, country of residence, address and declared fee status of each applicant. Where the combination of information provided suggests that the fee status declared by the applicant may be incorrect or insufficient information is provided the College carries out a fee status assessment. Fee status assessments are carried out by trained members of HE admissions staff in accordance with UK fees and awards regulations and guidance provided by the UK Council for International Student Affairs ([www.ukcisa.org](http://www.ukcisa.org)). The College does not exercise discretion when determining applicants' fee status.

The College reserves the right to amend an applicant's fee status after the formal offer has been issued.

The tuition fees for the first year of the course of study, together with the applicant's fee status, are included in the offer letter issued to the applicant.

**24. Fraudulent applications, including similarity detection in personal statements**

The validity of the documentation submitted by applicants at the initial offer, confirmation and CAS-issue stage are checked by trained staff. Where there is evidence that fraudulent or incorrect information has been included in the application form, the College reserves the right not to proceed with the application. Where there is satisfactory or sufficient evidence that fraudulent documents or incorrect information have been used to obtain an offer, the College reserves the right to withdraw an offer with immediate effect.

Applications submitted via UCAS are subject to the anti-fraud procedures and checks carried out by UCAS. All personal statements submitted via UCAS are subject to the UCAS similarity detection procedure. Where a personal statement contains significant similarities to another previously submitted to UCAS the College is notified of this and of the extent of the similarity.

Applications highlighted by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service are then considered in accordance with the relevant guidelines. Applicants highlighted by this service will be sent information about the College's policies on academic offences.

**25. Declaration of criminal convictions**

Applicants for courses that are subject to a mandatory DBS check<sup>2</sup> are required by the University to declare all criminal offences that are deemed to be unspent and spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013. If the Admissions Selector recommends that an offer be made, such applications will be referred for consideration in accordance with the College's Barring Service Checks Policy. Formal offers of admission will only be made following consideration of the conviction and application in accordance with the policy. Application of the policy takes place independently of the academic selection process, which is based entirely on academic merit and takes place in accordance with standard admissions policy

Applicants who are convicted of a criminal offence or receive a police caution after submitting an application for a mandatory course must inform the College. Disclosures can be made in writing to the Head of Undergraduate Admissions. Applicants who accept a place for study on a non-mandatory course are not required to disclose their criminal record prior to admission, but applicants under supervision or currently on licence are encouraged to make us aware of any conditions or requirements which may prevent them from fully engaging with their course and the broader College community. Where possible, the College will undertake to make reasonable adjustments, but if it becomes apparent that

the applicant is unable to meet the course learning outcomes, they may be required to withdraw their application or transfer to an alternative course.

In all cases, where applicants choose to share information about a criminal offence or police caution with the College, they will be offered support and guidance through the HE Student Support. Students studying a non-mandatory course may be required to disclose their criminal record at a later date after registering for the course where they engage in regulated activity that requires a DBS check, for example, through selecting a particular research topic or an optional module.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF OFFERS**

### **26. Applicant contract and 14 day right to cancel**

Applicants who apply to the College through UCAS are able to accept an offer of admission from the College as their firm or insurance choice via UCAS Track. A contract is made between the applicant and College at the point an offer of a place is accepted as either a firm or insurance choice via UCAS Track. If an applicant changes their mind after accepting the offer, they have the right to cancel the contract within 14 days. The cancellation period ends 14 days after the day on which the offer was accepted, but it is still possible to cancel after the 14 day period. Further information about the contract and the 14 day right to cancel is sent to applicants at the initial offer stage, in the College's Terms and Conditions

## **CONFIRMATION**

### **27. Consideration of applicant results**

The College considers the results of all applicants who are holding a Conditional Firm (CF) or Conditional Insurance (CI) place before deciding whether to confirm an applicant's place. A Level results and the results of some other qualifications are automatically provided to the College by UCAS. In the case of results not provided by UCAS, It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the Admissions team with evidence of the results of academic and English language qualifications. The College reserves the right not to confirm an applicant's place if they do not provide evidence of having met the conditions of their offer.

### **28. Verification of results**

The College reserves the right to verify all results by receiving and checking original certificates prior to confirming an applicant's place and/or permitting enrolment with the College. English language test results will be verified with the qualification awarding body (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL). The validity of documents at

confirmation is checked by trained staff in the Faculty of HE. Where results cannot be verified or where there is evidence that fraudulent documentation has been submitted, the College reserves the right not to confirm an applicant's place, or withdraw the place if the offer was originally unconditional.

**29. Applicants holding Conditional Firm offers**

On receipt of the applicant's results the HE Admissions team check to see if the conditions of the offer have been met. Where they have, the place is confirmed and UCAS is informed that the applicant's status is now Unconditional Firm (UF). Where the applicant's results have fallen short of the conditions of the offer, the applicant's place may be confirmed at the discretion of the CMA Compliance & Information Manager (HE) & the Programme Partnership Manager.

**30. Applicants holding CI offers**

The confirmation process for applicants holding CI offers is the same as for applicants holding CF offers. However, where the place is confirmed UCAS is informed that the applicant's status is now Unconditional Insurance (UI). Applicants whose status is UI only become UF where their first choice University (their original CF choice) rejects them at Confirmation.

**31. Communication of Confirmation Decisions**

All applicants holding CF or CI offers are informed of the College's confirmation decision via UCAS Track, regardless of whether they have successfully secured a place or not.

## **COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

All Complaints & Appeals will be dealt with under the Admissions Application Feedback Appeals and Complaints Policy.

## **DATA PROTECTION AND COMMUNICATION WITH THIRD PARTIES**

The Undergraduate Admissions Team within the Faculty of HE team aims to operate in compliance with data protection legislation and good records management practice. Applicants' data is treated as confidential by all staff involved in the admissions process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. In accordance with College policy, staff involved in admissions communicate only with applicants themselves, unless the applicant has given express permission for a third party to communicate on his/her behalf. Third parties may be parents, teachers, advisers or agents acting on behalf of applicants.

The College's Data Protection Policy explains how the College complies with its obligations under the relevant legislation, including the procedures for subject access requests and complaints in respect of personal data:

[GDPR | South Essex College](#)

## **Terms and Conditions**

It is important that applicants and their advisers are aware of the College's enrolment terms and conditions that will be legally binding on an applicant once the applicant accepts an offer of a place at the College. These can be found on the College website. The enrolment terms and conditions are incorporated into the Student Contract which will apply to all matters after the student has accepted an offer from the College.

## **SECTION 4 - ENROLMENT AND INDUCTION**

As part of its Welcome and academic induction process, the College aims to provide a comprehensive academic and pastoral induction process in order to support the transition of applicants to registered students at the end of the admissions process.

Prior to the start of the online registration process, students are prompted to activate their south Essex e-mail and HE Online Portal account. This email and HE Online portal account is used to access online registration. This College account also provides access to a range of resources once students are registered and throughout their



studies at University Centre South Essex , whilst also enabling free internet access on campus.

Before arrival at the College, applicants are provided with information about registration and enrolment with the College and induction activities. This will normally include: information about events provided by departments and the Student Union; services provided by Student Support; and general study skills provision, as well as information about good practice in academic writing, such as effective referencing and advice on how to avoid plagiarism.

Prior to stage 2 of enrolment applicants receive information relating to arrangements for enrolment and induction. These are published on the college website and provided by email/postal correspondence during the application cycle.

Enrolment is divided into 2 stages. Additional information can be found on [HE Enrolment | South Essex College](#)