



ADMISSIONS POLICY – January 2015

Institutional Context

This Policy relates to applications to all taught University higher education programmes on our campuses at Trefforest, Glyntaff, Cardiff, Caerleon, Newport, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and Merthyr Tydfil College. Collectively these are referred to as the University of South Wales Group. The Policy is written and applied in accordance with and alongside other University policies in the operation of admissions including the Academic Plan.

Underpinning the Admissions Policy is the University's Vision to be the University of choice in Wales and beyond, for students organisations and communities who value vocationally-focused education and applied research which provides solutions to problems that affect society and the economy.

Consideration has been given to relevant legislation with reference to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) [UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education](#), Furthermore the Policy has been cross referenced with the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) [Good Practise Guide on Admissions Policies](#) and the [SPA Good Practice Checklist for Admissions Policies, April 2014](#)

The Policy relates to all relevant University of South Wales undergraduate programmes taught at partner colleges.

Reference to postgraduate and taught and research programmes is made in section.4.2.

1 Admissions Principles

Applications are welcomed from applicants who have the capacity to participate and the interest and motivation to succeed in higher education. The decision to admit a student will be taken on individual merit, demonstrated through the application process to include:

- Personal statements
- Appropriate references

- Academic potential
- Assessment of prior achievement, whether by reference to academic or vocational qualifications, or prior experience described more broadly
- Ability to benefit from participation

1.1 Transparency

Admissions processes should be transparent to potential applicants. The provision of criteria for entry, the processes involved and the application of these processes are available to all applicants, both Home/EU and International. Relevant information is provided by the constituent members of the University of South Wales Group or partner college for UCAS Entry Profiles and for their own course web pages.

Feedback from successful and unsuccessful applicants is welcomed, and is monitored by the Enquires & Admissions Unit to aid the continuous improvement of the admissions process.

1.2 Basis of Selection

The selection process includes the consideration of application forms as outlined above. Interviews are held for some courses, including those where it is a requirement of a professional body which accredits particular courses.

The processes used in selection are underpinned by the following principles:

- The process is based on fairness and merit, seeking to minimise barriers and provide appropriate support. All applicants however must meet the minimum entrance requirements as specified in The Regulations for Taught Courses section A.2.3.4.
- We recognise that talent and potential may not always be reflected in examination results, and we welcome applications showing alternative evidence of skills and competences which may be accepted in lieu of formal qualifications.
- We take into account the diverse range of qualifications available and welcome applications from those with non-traditional qualifications. We will help applicants determine whether their qualifications are recognised as equivalent to those required for entry using nationally and internationally recognised sources e.g. UCAS and NARIC. We may request proof of qualifications during the application process.
- Students whose first language is not English or Welsh will be required to obtain a qualification acceptable to the University which indicates their ability to study through the medium of English or Welsh (where appropriate) and successfully complete their chosen course. Guidance can be obtained by referring to the web site and/or prospectus of the appropriate University of South Wales Group constituent member or partner college.

1.3 Reliability and validity

We seek to use valid and reliable selection methods in order to select and admit students who would benefit from and be able to complete our courses. Methods of assessment are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their capabilities and

potential and may include interviews, auditions, presentations and assessments. Some selection procedures and requirements are designed to ensure compliance with external regulations and professional requirements.

1.4 Minimising barriers

Candidates with a wide range of qualifications and experiences are welcomed by the University of South Wales Group or partner colleges. Entry requirements are detailed for each course in the respective University of South Wales Group or partner college prospectus, website and on the UCAS/CUKAS website for full-time undergraduate courses.

2 Responsibility for Admissions

2.1 Responsibilities

Admissions staff co-ordinate admission to all taught programmes as defined above. Each Faculty, constituent of the University of South Wales Group or partner college is responsible for setting its admissions criteria for each course in conjunction with University admissions staff as required. An annual review of admissions criteria is carried out by the Enquiries & Admissions Unit with each Faculty prior to the start of the admissions cycle.

The Enquires & Admissions Unit is responsible for making decisions on applications against agreed entry criteria where there is no interview, audition or review of a portfolio required. Where an interview, audition or review of a portfolio is required, the Enquiries & Admissions Unit co-ordinates with academic staff such activity and communicate their outcome in a timely and professional manner to applicants. See section 5 for details.

2.2 Monitoring and Review

The Policy is ratified by the University's Quality Assurance (QAC) Committee while day-to-day implementation is the responsibility of the Enquiries & Admissions Unit in consultation with Faculties and relevant Corporate Departments. Consultation on the Policy, and suggested amendments, will be undertaken by the Admissions Forum and presented to QAC for consideration, amendment and/or ratification. Consideration will be given to other University guidelines and associated policies. Compliance with other relevant legislation including the Human Rights Act, Equality Act 2010, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and the Welsh Language Act will be actively monitored.

Monitoring and review of policies and procedures is led by the Enquiries & Admissions Unit working with the Admissions Forum. The Admissions Policy is then presented to QAC for ratification or further amendment.

Admissions processes and procedures are reviewed annually by the Enquiries & Admissions Unit as part of its commitment to meet and retain the ISO9001: 2008 quality management framework.

The University of South Wales is committed to equal opportunities in its admissions and this is underpinned by the University of South Wales's "Strategic Equality Plan" (details available on request). An Equality Impact Assessment of the Policy is undertaken annually and is available on request.

2.3 Criminal Convictions

An applicant who has a relevant criminal conviction is required to state this on the application form. 'Relevant' is defined as offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, or offences involving supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant and the applicant should not reveal them. All such applications are assessed on an individual basis with the process co-ordinated by the Admissions Manager and in accordance to the current documented standard operating procedure.

2.4 Disclosure and Barring Service

Certain courses¹, for example teaching, health or social-work related subjects require an applicant to provide full disclosure of all offences at the point of application. These courses also necessitate an applicant to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The process is co-ordinated by the Enquiries & Admissions Unit in conjunction with relevant academic Faculties.

3 Application Process

3.1 Overview

All applicants to taught University higher education programmes on campus at Trefforest, Glyntaff, Cardiff, Caerleon, Newport and Merthyr Tydfil College must submit a fully completed Application Form, as defined in 4.6 - 4.8, supported by references and proof of qualifications prior to enrolment. Any applicant or enrolled student who fails to meet this requirement will not be offered a place or may be withdrawn from the University.

The Enquiries & Admissions Unit is responsible for receiving and processing applications as defined in 4.6 - 4.8. Communication to applicants up to pre-enrolment is also the responsibility of the Enquiries & Admissions Unit at which point Student Administration Services and the Faculties become responsible for online enrolment and course induction. The Enquiries & Admissions Unit co-ordinates the communication of enrolment and accommodation information to successful applicants to enable them to progress smoothly from prospective student to enrolled student.

3.2 Applicant Declaration

Applicants are required to sign a declaration that the information submitted as part of their application is correct to the best of their knowledge. If it transpires that any information submitted during the application process is incomplete or inaccurate the University reserves the right to take any appropriate action which may include rejection or withdrawal at the point of application or at any point after enrolment regardless of the duration of the course already studied.

3.3 Discontinued Students

University of South Wales students (or previous University of Glamorgan or University of Wales Newport students) who have a status of "discontinued" are not

¹ Applicants are encouraged to contact the University if they have any queries regarding which courses require a full disclosure.

normally allowed to reapply for a minimum of twelve months from the date they were discontinued. After this period they have the right to reapply but should be aware that their previous study will be taken into consideration along with any supporting evidence of further experience or academic study taken since leaving the University.

3.4 Course Changes

The University reserves the right to amend, alter or withdraw a course at any time and will inform applicants of such change at the earliest opportunity. Applicants will also be advised and supported in order to secure an alternative study option wherever possible within the University of South Wales.

The University annually reviews the number of places that can be offered on each course taking into consideration its strategic objectives and available resources. Some courses have their recruitment targets set by external agencies.

3.5 Decisions on Applications

The University, where all the required information has been submitted, will seek to make an admissions decision as soon as possible. Where additional information is required or an interview, audition or review of portfolio is needed, applicants and/or their advisers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity. Full details of what is required of the applicant are clearly given. Timings may be affected during peak periods or when approaching UCAS deadlines. All applications are assessed against agreed entry criteria and applicants are encouraged to review the University's course web pages for entry criteria and additional advice and guidance on the application process.

The University provides detailed advice and guidance information to all potential applicants through its website. Key information is provided relating to entry criteria, part-time provision, child care, Welsh-language teaching availability, location of study, Open Days, fees, scholarships and bursaries. These are continuously being updated and any feedback is welcomed.

3.6 Undergraduate Courses

All full-time undergraduate applications must be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), or Conservatoires UK Admissions Service (CUKAS) for music undergraduate courses at RWCMD, or for graduate teacher training through the UCAS Teacher Training. Part-time undergraduate and all postgraduate taught course applications should be made using the appropriate application form for the institution being applied to i.e. University of South Wales's on line application form, or the appropriate application form for Merthyr Tydfil College, RWCMD or a partner college unless otherwise stipulated.

3.6.1 Deferred Applications

Deferred applications for undergraduate study are accepted for many courses, however a small number are not able to accommodate deferred entry so all applicants should confirm with the Enquires & Admissions Unit if deferral is possible before applying.

3.7 Postgraduate Research Degrees

The University of South Wales Group offers a full range of academic programmes including postgraduate research degrees e.g. MPhil and PhD provision. All

applications should be made directly to the relevant constituent of the University of South Wales Group.

Postgraduate Research applications are considered under Faculty Research Applications Panel guidelines as directed by the University's Research Regulations.

3.8 Postgraduate Taught Degrees

The minimum admission requirement for a postgraduate award is a degree or professional qualification recognised as equivalent.

The minimum admission requirement for a Master's or Master's by Research award is normally an honours degree and/or evidence of sufficient subject expertise to give confidence the applicant can attain Master's level in that subject in the majority of credits for the award.

Previous, substantial related experience in business, industry or the professions is a frequent alternative or additional admissions criterion for both postgraduate and Master's programmes.

All applications should be made directly to the relevant constituent of the University of South Wales Group or partner college.

3.9 Record of Prior Learning & Transfers

For students wishing to be considered for entry the University of South Wales Group or partner college is able, in many instances and taking into consideration the requirements of relevant professional bodies, to accredit prior learning in accordance with its published regulations (Regulation for Taught Courses A.2.3.10). Students who wish to transfer from another institution are provided with advice on the transfer of any credit they may have been awarded elsewhere. Credit can also be given to relevant work or life experience under these regulations and advice can be obtained from institution admissions staff.

3.10 International Admissions

Applications for admission from international students are considered in exactly the same way as Home/EU applications except where additional requirements are placed upon the institution by Government/legislative bodies. These include the requirements of the Points Based System (Tier 4) as defined by the Home Office.

3.11 Fee Assessments

Where an applicant's fee status is uncertain we may request additional information to enable us to determine the correct status.

3.12 Enquiries & Advice

Where an applicant's qualifications do not provide a suitable match for a particular course of study, advice may be given on alternative programmes either at the University or at a partner institution or courses of action that may be taken.

Enquiries can be made to admissions staff within the University of South Wales Group or partner college who will be able to answer queries or refer them to the other staff in Faculties/Departments. Enquirers are encouraged to attend Open Days offering the opportunity to meet with academic staff and familiarise themselves with the relevant constituent of the University of South Wales Group or partner college.

Applicants may be required to attend an interview, audition or review of portfolio as part of the selection process to enable academic staff to make decisions or judgements about relative potential or where there are a limited number of places available or where they are able to offer guidance to applicants on the suitability of their chosen course.

Applicants with specific learning or other needs are advised, to seek further advice from the appropriate Student Services Department within the University of South Wales Group or partner college.

4 Communications to applicants including feedback and complaints

All written communication will be sent by the appointed admissions staff at each constituent member of the University of South Wales Group or partner college. In the case of unsuccessful applicants, feedback, advice and guidance will be provided in consultation with academic staff as requested. All requests for feedback must be made in writing to the constituent member of the University of South Wales Group or partner college. No communications will be entered into with anyone other than the applicant, or without the applicant's consent.

Where an applicant has a complaint about the University of South Wales admissions process the applicant should put their complaint in writing to the Admissions Manager via enquiries@southwales.ac.uk . Applicants should include their name, address date of birth and the course applied for. Complaints will normally be responded to in full within 20 working days.

The University of South Wales will consider appeals made in writing with regards the outcome of a selection decision. The appeal should be made in writing to the Admissions Manager via enquiries@southwales.ac.uk . Applicants should include their name, address date of birth and the course applied for. Appeals will normally be responded to in full within 20 working days.

The University is committed to providing unsuccessful applicants with the opportunity to receive appropriate feedback about their applications.

4.1 Enquirer and Applicant Conversion Activity

Throughout the admissions process the University undertakes relevant conversion activity to provide advice, guidance and specific information to applicants and enquirers who have indicated through applying or having opted into receiving conversion/marketing communications. Conversion activity includes but is not necessarily limited to tailored information which may assist enquirers and applicants in their study decisions.

5 Admissions staff

All Admissions staff undertake continuous training and development ensuring they are aware of University, national, and international developments in relation to admissions to higher education. Close liaison between admissions staff and those in the Faculties/departments ensures consistency and transparency of the admissions

process. Guidance is available in the form written and verbal briefings at key periods in the admissions cycle, and training is available in relation to their particular processes and procedures.

6 Procedures

This Policy should be considered alongside published admissions and related procedures, with specific reference to the University's Regulations for Taught Courses, that are produced and regularly reviewed by appropriate staff at the constituent members of the University of South Wales Group and partner colleges.

7 Student Charter

This policy has been developed with consideration for the principles and edicts of the University of South Wales's [Student Charter](#) which is accessible to all applicants and students.

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