

Admissions Procedures

Academic Registry

NB. This policy is available on the University of Cumbria website and it should be noted that any printed copies are uncontrolled and cannot be guaranteed to constitute the current version of the policy.

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UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA POLICY DOCUMENT CONTROL SCHEDULE

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University of Cumbria Admissions Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The mission of the University is to raise aspirations and educational attainment and contribute to the social, cultural and economic well-being and prosperity of our communities.
- 1.2. To achieve this the University encourages and welcomes students of all ages whatever their disability, race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, nationality, gender identity or other equality protected characteristics and gives fair consideration to all enquirers and applicants of credit bearing taught programmes and Higher Level Apprenticeships, treating them solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. These procedures are designed to ensure fairness, consistency and equality of opportunity and apply to home, EU and international students. They provide a framework in which all those involved in admissions should operate under as part of the University's commitment to [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#).
- 1.3. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the separate Admissions Policy. The Admissions Procedures undergo periodic review and may be updated at any time to ensure clarity, accuracy and best practice. Please refer to the on-line version to verify currency of any printed copies of this document at [Policies \(cumbria.ac.uk\)](#).

2. Enquiries and Recruitment

- 2.1. The University is committed to providing high quality, up to date and accurate information to enquirers and prospective students. This is achieved through a variety of channels and key activities as follows.
- 2.2. The University's Course Enquiry Centre manages all enquiries to the University via email, phone and face to face, and usually respond to all enquiries accurately and clearly within 4 working days of receipt. The University also runs a series of events across all of its campuses to support the provision of information in a timely fashion to all those interested in attending the institution either pre or post application. These include open days and evenings, applicant visit days and regular opportunities to visit the campuses for a tour throughout the year. The events are accessible to all prospective students and are an opportunity for them to find out up-to-date information about their course of interest, higher education fees and funding and student support at the University.
- 2.3. The University produces a variety of information to support enquirers, both in printed format and via the website – www.cumbria.ac.uk. These include prospectuses with course information and details on entry requirements most which are reviewed annually. Enquirers are asked to visit the website for the up-to-date accurate information, due to potential changes in courses and entry grades which may occur post-publication of hard copy resources.
- 2.4. Targeted outreach work is carried out by the University Recruitment Team within schools, colleges regionally and nationally and with specific regional community groups such as groups for young people in care. This includes direct work supporting students in making applications to university and giving accurate information, advice and guidance on areas such as student finance. The institution also works with advisors within schools, colleges and community based careers services to support them in providing accurate information about higher education and also with other key influencers such as parents or carers. Additionally, the University provides a range of [on-campus events](#) for schools and colleges such as subject taster days, details of which can be found on the website. Staff providing information and advice are members of the Higher Education Liaison Officers' Association (HELOA) and attend regular training events and conferences as part of their membership.

3. Management of Admissions

- 3.1. The University operates a centralised approach to admissions. Admissions teams work closely with Academic subject areas to manage the process and are responsible for all communications to applicants. Admission to all full-time undergraduate degree, foundation degree and top-up degree courses is normally conducted via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). PGCE courses recruit mainly via the Department for Education's Apply system.
- 3.2. All other full and part time HE courses, including Apprenticeships and postgraduate provision (including MA, MSc, PgDip, PgCert programmes) recruit via on-line application to the University or partner institution. Admission to higher degrees by research are considered by the Head of Research and Head of the Graduate School of the University of Cumbria (UoC).

4. Objectivity and Confidentiality

- 4.1. Staff who have a personal, social or family relationship with any candidate for admission must make a declaration of interest in the candidate to their relevant line manager and must desist from any dealings with the candidate's application as soon as they are aware of an application.
- 4.2. Selection will not normally be made on the basis of information received out-with the application process. However, where relevant information is drawn to the University's attention, it must be discussed with the applicant and the applicant given the opportunity to make submissions as to the relevance of that information to the application. A decision will then be taken as to whether or not that information is to be considered as part of the application.
- 4.3. Information will not be disclosed to third parties who are not involved in the selection process on behalf of the University without the written consent of the applicant or otherwise in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) which supplements the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- 4.4. Information on candidates who do not become registered students is normally destroyed in the Autumn Term one year after the candidate would have been admitted, after the completion of any necessary monitoring process.
- 4.5. All staff involved in admissions undertake compulsory training in data protection to ensure compliance.

5. Criteria for Selection

- 5.1. The selection process is based on a range of criteria established and reviewed annually or as appropriate by the subject discipline in consultation with Admissions and considers the level of competition for each course and any professional and/or statutory requirements. It takes account of the total profile of the applicant including:
 - qualifications held and predicted grades
 - motivation for the course of study
 - experience
 - personal suitability (in terms of the requirements of the course, profession and professional body)
 - other appropriate supporting information
 - the ability to benefit from and succeed in HE.
- 5.2. The quality of the candidate's personal statement (bearing in mind the need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants) will assist in the evaluation of these aspects of the application. Consideration of the comments of the referee will also assist in the evaluation of the application.
- 5.3. Criteria should be framed in terms of person/course specifications based on the key areas below:

- Academic suitability, including international student qualifications
- Personal suitability for the course of study
- Professional suitability including the potential/ability to meet professional competency standards
- The ability to meet the generic learning outcomes for the programme, especially where they include specific criteria in a practical setting
- Medical requirements of the course and professional body (taking into account reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, as appropriate)
- Disclosure and Barring Service background clearance checks (where applicable)

6. Academic Suitability

- 6.1. General entry requirements and specific course requirements in accordance with those approved by the University and or the relevant awarding body including relevant equivalent qualifications are reviewed annually.
- 6.2. The University's general entry requirements are set out in the appendices section). These are published annually on the University website, and on UCAS/DfE entry profiles. Where relevant, subject requirements and entry grades/point scores/tariffs are determined annually through consultations between the relevant subject senior managers and admissions staff. Typical offer levels will be set at the top of any entry requirement range entry and offers will be linked to pre-prescribed contextual data and information on the applicant and on the competition for the course. Applicants should check on-line information for the criteria relevant to their year of entry as entry levels do vary from year to year. During clearing, offer levels may be reviewed to take account of any remaining vacancies.
- 6.3. Admissions Tutors/Admissions Administrators consider whether they reasonably expect each applicant to be able to achieve the required standard to be able to complete their chosen course of study successfully. As part of that consideration, those selecting will consider any previous study and relevant attainment as an indicator of potential where appropriate.
- 6.4. Applicants to postgraduate and professional graduate (PGCE) courses are expected to have a degree in a relevant subject area or equivalent (where appropriate), normally at good Honours (Iii) standard or above or at the level set by the relevant professional body. Post-registration professional courses require applicants to have prior academic study or experience at the appropriate professional level. Please refer to the qualification appendix for further information.
- 6.5. The University welcomes applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds with a range of experience and gives fair consideration to all applicants treating them solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. Applicants presenting alternative qualifications and or experience different to those shown in the appendix should be able to demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and to show their potential to complete the course successfully. Although recent preparatory study at an appropriate level is recommended, students may be considered individually on the basis of prior evidenced professional/work experience and/or diagnostic assessment procedures, and the assessment of personal suitability. University admissions office staff will be able to offer information and advice on this process.

7. Personal Suitability for the course of study

- 7.1. In line with the criteria linked to student success in higher education identified by the Fair Enough? Project (UUK, 2003), the University will give consideration to the criteria identified by the Project. Students should have:
- the ability to manage self/be self-organised
 - the ability to work well independently, using autonomy and taking responsibility
 - the commitment and motivation to learn

- an interest and commitment to the subject area
- the ability to work with others (where relevant)
- the pre-requisite literacy/numeracy skills
- intellectual skills
- course specific skills

7.2. Such criteria

- may be used in the compilation of the person/course specification
- may be utilised at the initial stage of selection for interview
- may be given weighting in lieu of predicted or actual underachievement on grades for identified students
- may be of help in evaluating the readiness for study of non-standard entrants
- may be utilised by subject disciplines according to the priorities for that discipline.

8. Professional Suitability

- 8.1. For courses involving professional education elements candidates are expected to show evidence of personal qualities that suggest that they have the potential to become members of that profession. These may be as determined by the standards of the relevant professional/commissioning body (as appropriate) and are regularly reviewed.
- 8.2. Candidates for courses which lead to a professional qualification may be required to provide an additional reference from a practising professional in relation to their participation in voluntary work and their potential for professional education.
- 8.3. Applicants for courses of initial teacher training must meet the requirements from the Department for Education (DfE), Initial teacher training criteria (Updated 1 September 2022) relating to basic GCSE at Grade 4/C or equivalent competencies in Mathematics and English Language for secondary courses as well as Science for primary courses. Entry requirements may be reviewed dependent on guidance from the relevant professional body.
- 8.4. Applicants for pre-registration nursing and midwifery courses must also meet requirements set by the University following National Midwifery Council (NMC) Guidelines.
- 8.5. Applicants for social work and other health care professional courses must also meet the requirements set by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

9. Interview Policy

- 9.1. Currently an interview is obligatory for all professional courses of HE education and training (Teaching, Nursing & Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Radiography, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Paramedic Science and Counselling). The interview procedure will include assessment of personal qualities for the course of study and professional suitability. Candidates who meet the stipulated criteria on the basis of the written application for professional courses (as detailed above) are therefore required to attend for interview before final selection for a place. Where entry to courses is competitive, to assist fair selection, criteria may be weighted and the candidates scored against the criteria. They may then be selected for interview on this basis. Information is provided to applicants in advance of the interview to allow time for preparation and to give an outline of what will be expected. Where an applicant is unable to attend a statutory interview due to access to IT, distance or disability, for example, alternative methods may be considered if professional bodies and assessment of entry criteria allow.

- 9.2. Admission to other courses at the University may include an interview and other courses may be developed which fall into this category. This does not necessarily mean that if one candidate is interviewed, then all others must be interviewed. For example, it may be appropriate to interview candidates who proceed to a second stage or a shortlist to distinguish between candidates with similar academic profiles. Further, it may be appropriate to interview a candidate whose application does not provide sufficient information on which to base a decision, such as in the case of a candidate with non-standard qualifications or where a student does not satisfy the standard entry requirements. Where an interview is considered necessary, interviews may be arranged at the discretion of the courses admission's tutor in conjunction with admissions staff.
- 9.3. The University works in partnership with schools and other professional areas. Tutors and other professionals work together in the interview procedures. Serving teachers are involved in interviews for teacher education and training courses and professional colleagues from clinical practice in Nursing, Radiography, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy may similarly be involved for professional courses in those areas.
- 9.4. Candidates for courses in arts, design, media and performance-based courses are normally required to present an E portfolio of work and to have a follow up interview. This will either be face to face or virtually.
- 9.5. Students offered places on full time undergraduate provision are given the opportunity to visit the University on one of the Applicant Visit Days.

10. Medical Requirements

- 10.1. Candidates for teacher training courses must be assessed as physically and mentally fit for teaching in accordance with DfE entry criteria (Updated 1 September 2022) and have met the Secretary of State's requirements for physical and mental fitness to teach. Candidates for Nursing, Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Paramedic Science, Social Work and Diagnostic Radiography are required to undertake an occupational health check for medical fitness and will have an appointment with the University designated Occupational Health Team to administer appropriate vaccination screening. Most medical clearances will be achieved via the completion of a University Medical Questionnaire, but where further investigation via physical examination or via consultant's reports is required the costs of any such investigations must be met by the candidate. In such cases this will be arranged either face to face or through other means.
- 10.2. The University reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place from any candidate who, in the opinion of the University Occupational Health Team is not medically fit for admission or fit to study the course in question on the grounds of not satisfying the occupational health requirements for the particular profession once consideration has been given to the making of reasonable adjustments. Such students may appeal by providing further medical evidence. This will be considered by the Occupational Health Officers, but where this incurs a considerable delay (as may happen in the case of late entrants) students may be required either to defer their place or to intercalate as necessary.

11. Criminal Records Background Clearance

- 11.1. Further information outlining the specific policy and procedures relating to this is available [at; Policies \(cumbria.ac.uk\)](#) or by request from a University admissions office.
- 11.2. Clearance for the practical, placement elements of vocational courses is a requirement under the terms of the relevant legislation. In response to this, the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) was set-up at a national level to facilitate necessary checks on the criminal records background of persons seeking to work with children, young people, and vulnerable groups.

- 11.3. The courses for which the University requires applicants to undergo this clearance procedure are normally subject to the Enhanced Disclosure procedure via the DBS and a complementary internal clearance process.
- 11.4. The Enhanced Disclosure procedure will show:
- Details of both spent and unspent convictions cautions
 - Non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the course.
- 11.5. It will also state if there is nothing on record.
- 11.6. Candidates for all courses involving potentially unsupervised, substantial access to children and vulnerable adults, normally through placement activities, will require an Enhanced Disclosure.
- 11.7. Other courses which fall into relevant employment categories requiring clearance are subject to either Standard or Enhanced Disclosure procedures, as determined by DBS guidelines.
- 11.8. Prospective students who have concerns about this requirement may discuss these procedures in confidence with the DBS Team.
- 11.9. There is a separate University Policy on Criminal Records Background Clearance. The Policy has been modified by the University Policy on Child Protection, which makes provision for more serious cases of criminal convictions to be considered by a Clearance Panel, comprising at least two designated members of the University (normally the Admissions Manager and a senior representative from the relevant academic Institute).
- 11.10. As part of its duty of care, the University requires all candidates who disclose a criminal conviction to provide further information concerning the conviction in order for the University to decide whether it would be appropriate for the candidate to become a member of the University community. Further information on that process can be found here <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/applicants/policies/>.
- 11.11. The University Policy on Criminal Records Background Clearance is subject to changes which may arise as a result of national developments. Policies will be amended accordingly.
- 11.12. New courses which may be developed involving substantial unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults will also be subject to the preceding DBS clearance process.

12. Age on Admission

- 12.1. The minimum age to study a degree programme at the University is normally at least 17 years old by September in the year the course begins.
- 12.2. Students will be admitted to the University in line with any national legislation or professional body requirements on a required minimum age for higher education.
- 12.3. Any applicant who has not reached 18 by registration for the course will be admitted but on the understanding that their parents or guardians have given written agreement in advance acknowledging that the University will not act in loco parentis. Individual risk assessments may be carried out depending on the course content.

13. Re-admission following academic failure/adjudication/fitness to practise, withdrawal

- 13.1. A student may seek re-admission to the University following de-registration on grounds of academic failure or adjudication/fitness to practise, or having by personal request withdraws from current study. Where a student

has outstanding adjudication processes pending from previous study at the University, or where an adjudication has taken place but the sanctions and actions identified have not been completed by the student at the point of withdrawal those processes and sanctions will be applicable before recommencement of study to any course is possible. Continuation of study will also be at the discretion of the losing and admitting department and subject to University Academic Regulations and any professional or regulatory body requirements. Students can only be readmitted to the same course following academic failure/withdrawal with support from the course team and relevant assessment board.

14. Advanced Entry

- 14.1. Students with prior certificated or experiential learning may apply for advanced entry onto the programme in line with the regulations and procedures set out by the University. Further advice and guidance about Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) can be obtained from the admissions office, the APL Officer- (by contacting apl@cumbria.ac.uk) or by checking the [University APL website](#).
- 14.2. Students who apply for admission with advanced standing may also need to be interviewed and are processed by a designated APL Officer with relevant experience. Criteria will be based on candidates demonstrating both general and specific subject HE or equivalent credits.

15. Students in debt

- 15.1. Any student in debt to the University will not be accepted through the admissions procedure onto a new course until the outstanding debt has been paid or arrangements approved by the Finance Department have been put in place to settle the debt.

16. Falsification or Misrepresentation

- 16.1. The University reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place to candidates who falsify or misrepresent their applicant details in any respect and will report cases of fraud/plagiarism to the relevant central application body. Candidates in these circumstances will be given an opportunity to explain discrepancies or anomalies as appropriate. The University may terminate a student's registration if they are at a late stage found to have submitted a fraudulent application following action taken through the University's student disciplinary procedures.

17. Disabled Applicants and those with Specific Learning Difficulties

- 17.1. Applications from disabled students or those with a Specific Learning Difficulty (e.g. dyslexia) will be assessed on the basis of the standard academic or non-academic selection criteria for the course as applied to all students.
- 17.2. Applicants with a disability or a Specific Learning Difficulty are encouraged to contact Student Services to discuss their needs in advance of an interview or starting their course. This will allow for the consideration of reasonable adjustments within the recruitment process prior to the candidate commencing a course of study and so that the University can ensure that the candidate's needs can be met. Any additional support needs/reasonable adjustments are considered separately from the admission process and the decision as to whether the applicant meets the standard selection criteria for the course.
- 17.3. Where factors are identified which impact on health and safety concerns, potential barriers relating to professional requirements or relevant competency standards, discussions will take place and feedback provided to the student. In some cases, the offer of a place on an alternative course may be offered. Where the University concludes that it is unable to meet the student's needs (following a careful consideration of the reasonable adjustments it is able to provide), the offer of a place may be withdrawn. Such students may appeal by providing further medical evidence. This will be considered by the Occupational Health Officers, but where this incurs a

considerable delay (as may happen in the case of late entrants) students may be required either to defer their place or to intercalate as necessary.

18. International Students

- 18.1. International students must have entry qualifications equivalent to the general requirements for admission to their particular course in accordance with the UK ENIC equivalences. The international admissions staff and the International Office can research and advise on the equivalence of qualifications where requested. To enable a selection decision to be reached applicants must provide certified translations of their qualifications and where necessary a deadline may be set when this information must be received.
- 18.2. Applicants whose first language is not English must be able to demonstrate competence normally through recognised equivalent qualifications e.g. specific scores in IELTS. Further details can be found; <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/internationalstudents/entry-requirements/>
- 18.3. Where the selection for the chosen course involves face to face interaction e.g. interview, alternative arrangements will be considered with each candidate who meets the initial criteria.
- 18.4. All international students assessed accordingly must comply with the relevant Home Office UK Visa and Immigration visa requirements prior to entry and registration for their course and where appropriate adhere to the arrangements for payment of fees. Specific information to support International students can be found on the University's website and all International students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these. Please go to the University's website for more information; <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/study/international-students>

19. Withdrawal of offer prior to registration

- 19.1. The University shall only withdraw the offer of a place to an individual student if:
 - the candidate fails to meet any of the conditions for entry.
 - there is a change in the candidate's circumstances or the University becomes aware of information which, in the reasonable opinion of the University, makes it inappropriate for the candidate to study on a particular course or for attendance at the University in general.
 - in the reasonable opinion of the University, the candidate is not fit for admission and/or study on the course or if the candidate is proposing to join a course which has professional accreditation that they are not fit to practise that profession.
 - where a candidate has provided false and/or misleading information/documents in support of their application.
- 19.2. The University shall only withdraw the availability of a course prior to registration if it is impossible to provide the course through serious unforeseen circumstances;
 - the University fails to recruit a satisfactory cohort such that the quality of the student experience cannot be maintained or the course is not economically viable.
 - the course no longer forms part of the University's strategic objectives.
- 19.3. In the event of a course or programme having to be withdrawn or discontinued for any reason, or in the event of significant changes being made to the programme, the University undertakes to notify students directly and to provide assistance to the student in securing an alternative place, either within the University or elsewhere.

20. Monitoring and Review of Policies and Procedures

- 20.1. The University regularly monitors and reviews its admissions policies and procedures so that they are fit for purpose and best serve our applicants and the University's aims in light of changing circumstances.

21. The Admissions Process

- 21.1. On receipt of the application the relevant admissions team will usually send an acknowledgement within 2 working days.

22. Roles and Responsibilities

- 22.1. The University Admissions Policy and its operation is the responsibility of the Academic Registrar and their staff. All staff must ensure that admissions activities within their remit comply with the policy and procedures.
- 22.2. All initial enquiries prior to application are dealt with by the Course Enquiries Centre. Following application, all future enquiries are handled by the relevant Admissions team.
- 22.3. Staff involved in the administration of admissions, and those involved in selecting and interviewing applicants undertake regular training to ensure their continued professional competence is maintained e.g. equality and diversity and unconscious bias training.
- 22.4. The University is committed to ensuring that all admissions activities are conducted professionally and effectively. As part of this commitment the University expects that all interaction with applicants is conducted courteously, efficiently and respectfully.
- 22.5. Applicants should note that the University does not tolerate inappropriate behaviour towards its staff. Any abuse, threatening behaviour or mistreatment of staff will not be tolerated and may prejudice the further consideration of an application, appeal or complaint.
- 22.6. Staff from Recruitment, the Admissions Office and Academic staff are involved in the operation of the Admissions Policy and Procedure.
- 22.7. All applications are initially received by Admissions before being assessed by those academics identified as Admissions Tutors or by designated Admissions Administrators. At all stages of selection, Admissions is available for consultation on admissions/qualification queries and for advice about non-standard entry.
- 22.8. Admissions handles all written and computerised admissions communications with candidates and with UCAS/DfE, ensuring the accuracy of the offers before dispatch to these external agencies or the candidate; supports and or organises interviews and Applicant Visit Days; conducts the monitoring of applications/offers/targets, and central administrative matters related to applications to the University and publishes, for the relevant committee, a report on admissions data.
- 22.9. Admissions is also responsible for stipulating the terms of the offers in line with agreed standards and individual subject requirements. Any particular recommendations made by the academic selectors, particularly concerning professional conditions or compensatory factors will be identified for note and further consideration as appropriate where places are being confirmed after the publication of results.
- 22.10. Admissions Officers check the applications of candidates who are not to be offered a place and scrutinises the reasons for rejection against the relevant selection criteria for the course. Discrepancies are brought to the attention of the Tutor for action. Such cases may be brought to the attention of senior Academic Institute staff as necessary.

23. Academic Institutes

- 23.1. The designated Admissions Tutor/Admissions Administrator are responsible for the initial scrutiny of application forms and for the interview selection. Designated staff within each Academic Institute are responsible for providing tutors for interview/Visit Day sessions.
- 23.2. Tutors participate in Interview/Visit Days and are asked to indicate their availability for particular dates.
- 23.3. The Heads of Student Recruitment and Portfolio Development are involved in dispute/problem/special needs cases and wherever a third view is needed.
- 23.4. Where collaborative provision is offered the memorandum of agreement will set out the roles and responsibilities of relevant staff to ensure a common understanding of practices and procedures in respect of the admission of students.

24. Initial Selection

- 24.1. The selection process is criterion driven. Criteria for initial selection are determined and reviewed each year. Students whose written applications do not meet the criteria and are rejected for that course may be offered an alternative opportunity.
- 24.2. Places or interviews are offered to the candidates based on their performance against the criteria, subject to availability. Where entry to courses is competitive to assist fair selection, criteria may be weighted, and candidates scored against criteria. A gathered field approach will operate in this case to enable all suitably qualified applicants to be considered before decisions are confirmed. All candidates who apply by the initial national closing dates are thus able to compete fairly for places.
- 24.3. Admission decisions will be made as quickly as possible but where a course is competitive as outlined above the process is likely to take longer to ensure fairness. Delays will however be kept to a minimum and where necessary candidates will be kept informed of the status of their application.

25. The Personal Statement

- 25.1. All aspects of the candidates' experience are evaluated in the final decision. The quality of the content and the expression of the candidates' personal statement are considered and may be particularly significant where entry is competitive. The personal statements may also provide a good source of evidence regarding the personal suitability criteria.

26. References

- 26.1. The report of the referee is considered, particularly in relation to evidence regarding the criteria on personal suitability. However, exclusion from selection for interview shall not be based solely on the comments of the referee.
- 26.2. At interview where there are divergences in the assessment of the student between the referee's estimate and the interviewer's estimate, these should be recorded on the interview report.
- 26.3. References are essential for courses leading to professional recognition. For such courses, in addition to comments about academic ability, it is expected that the referee will also be able to comment on the candidate's suitability for their intended profession.

- 26.4. Where it is not possible for a candidate to provide an academic reference, a reference may be sought from a person of standing who can attest to the candidate's motivation and suitability for HE study and professional training. References from family members or friends will not be accepted.
- 26.5. For some higher degrees and diplomas two references are required.
- 26.6. References are not discussed with the candidate unless the permission of the referee has been secured.
- 26.7. References should be current and should relate to the course to which admission is sought.

27. Interview Procedures

- 27.1. The conduct of interviews is uniform to the programme to which the candidate is being admitted. As far as possible the pattern of questioning is the same for all candidates. To enable candidates from all backgrounds to compete fairly questions should be framed to enable candidates to demonstrate any additionality or value added which may enable them to enhance their candidacy or to compensate for possible weakness in other criteria.
- 27.2. Discussion of additional support needs issues/facilities or Criminal Background clearance issues take place outside the formal selection interview, with a DBS Panel or the Disability/SpLD team. Reasonable adjustments will be considered as and when appropriate. Applicants are encouraged to contact staff in advance of the interview to discuss their support needs.
- 27.3. To assist the achievement of parity in the structure of the interview, interviews are recorded on-line or paper on a specially designed interview scoring sheet appropriate to the programme to which the candidate is being admitted. Each scoring criteria is reviewed annually or as appropriate to ensure continuing relevance.
- 27.4. A meaningful record of the interview is made, to indicate how far candidates meet or fail to meet the criteria and where appropriate scores are recorded. Where a candidate is rejected the evidence for the failure to meet the criteria is noted.
- 27.5. Written selection tests which may form part of the interview process are designed to be free from bias and consider equality and diversity characteristics to allow full engagement with the selection. Candidates who would qualify for extra time in assessments are allowed an appropriate concession for such tests. Some candidates may qualify for extra time in assessments (see section 17) and in such cases an appropriate concession will be arranged.

28. Place Offers

- 28.1. The place offer constitutes a legal contract, which takes effect in Higher Education only when the student accepts the offer. All pre-contractual information, including but not limited to the University's terms and conditions, tuition fees policy and Appeals and Complaints policy will be available to the student on the University website. Upon acceptance of the offer the student will become subject to the regulations and terms and conditions of the institution.
- 28.2. Standard offers are made according to set criteria. Details on academic grades and any other conditions are communicated either directly to the student or via UCAS. In line with best practice no applicant receives less favourable treatment than others, and candidates are given the help they need to fulfil their potential.
- 28.3. The University does consider additional elements in offer making of a contextual nature. Criteria which will be considered for the admissions cycle will be clearly denoted on the University website. Where contextual

information has been considered and applied the applicant will be informed in their offer communication from the University.

- 28.4. Where students are identified as having a disadvantage, they can be enabled to provide additional information or to complete supplementary tasks to compensate for any shortfall on grades. This allows candidates to compete equally by the balancing of straight academic achievements with supplementary achievements, which are regarded as contributing equivalent value in their admissions profile.
- 28.5. Place offers for students with a disability/specific learning difficulty are made independently of consideration of support needs and are not delayed by such considerations.

29. Rejections

- 29.1. No candidate can be rejected without the agreement of two members of staff either Admissions or Institute. Where rejection is at the stage of the written application admissions staff identify such candidates and checks the rejection against the admissions criteria. Should a discrepancy be noted the application is returned to the subject area for a review. Cases which cause concern may be referred to the Director or Head of Student Recruitment and Portfolio Development by the appropriate senior member of Admissions.
- 29.2. Where a tutor is the sole interviewer and considers that a candidate should not be offered a place, they must seek a second opinion from another colleague who similarly has the expertise to assess the candidate for the course. The rejection must be endorsed by both tutors. This would normally take place after the interview has taken place and would involve a paper-based process.
30. Applicants who are rejected via the central admissions system without an interview are given feedback on request. Candidates who are rejected after interview are notified direct by the University and are given written feedback on the reasons for the rejection, based on evidence of failure to meet criteria as indicated on the interview form. Candidates who meet the essential criteria, but whose performance is not as strong as that of other applicants will be advised that they have not been offered a place in competition with other candidates.
- 30.1. Applicants not considered for their original course choice due to competition for places or academic/professional suitability may be offered an alternative course. Details are provided on the course and opportunities are given to find out more prior to the applicant deciding on their course of choice.

31. Verification of Qualifications

- 31.1. Candidates for admission to all full time and substantive part-time, undergraduate, foundation, postgraduate degree courses and Higher Level Apprenticeships are required to provide documentary evidence of all qualifications held. Applicants enrolling on a teacher training course must provide original certificates of relevant qualifications held to satisfy DfE requirements. Eligibility for admission rests on verification of qualifications and must be provided by registration for the course or where stated at an earlier date. International students can provide notarised copies of certificates at the admission stage but must provide originals at the point of registration.
- 31.2. In a situation where a student is unable to provide suitable verification following discussion the University reserves the right to withdraw the place and instigate deregistration from the course. Any relevant funding will also be withheld until verification is provided.

32. Deferred Entry

- 32.1. Requests for deferred entry will be considered on an individual basis and are subject to availability of the given course and any changes to entry requirements.

33. Transitional Arrangements

- 33.1. To support applicants in the transition to registered student once they have accepted a course offer, the University provides a range of activities prior to registration. These include general support such as the on-line Head-start programme offered to all applicants which prepares students for University life and study.
- 33.2. Following initial offer and acceptance of a place, applicants receive regular email communications, giving information on key areas such as student finance and applying for accommodation. Information is also provided on satisfying non-academic conditions e.g. DBS and providing certificates. The University also employs student ambassadors who contact offered candidates prior to enrolment to offer support, information, and advice. Further support and information are given at the applicant visit days for the majority of applicants where there is the opportunity to talk further with relevant academic staff.

34. Confirmation and Clearing

- 34.1. Applicants are provided in advance of the timescales, guidance on the procedure for confirming their results and what to do if they underachieve. Contact details are made available with written communications being sent out as well as on-line information being available. During clearing, places are filled for any remaining vacancies involving academic and support staff. Applicants are given the opportunity to visit the University prior to. All applicants are provided with arrival information and asked to complete on- line registration in advance of their start date. Entry Grades during Clearing are agreed in advance by the relevant committee.

35. Review of Admissions Decision for applicants

- 35.1. To safeguard the interests of prospective students, the University has established an Admissions Policy and Procedure: Review of Admissions Decision. Applicants will not be disadvantaged in any way because they have used the procedure. The current version of this document is available [here](#). For complaints and appeals relating to the DBS process, please refer to the **separate** 'Procedure on Disclosure of Criminal Background...', available on the above link.

University of Cumbria Academic Entry Requirements

1. General Entry Requirements to Higher Education (HE) Level Courses

To satisfy the general entry requirements candidates need to be able to demonstrate evidence of competence in English Language, to have evidence of a wide range of study at GCSE level, and to possess one of the qualification routes set out below, which are regarded as equivalent to a minimum of two GCE A Level passes. Where 'English' is stipulated as part of entry requirements an 'English Language' qualification is expected.

Additionally, for courses of initial teacher training a GCSE pass at Grade 4/C (or its equivalent) in English Language and mathematics is required and for primary teacher training courses, a pass at Grade 4/C in science or equivalent is required. Other degree courses may stipulate particular GCSE passes at grade 4/C.

Passes may be gained at separate sittings and individual courses may specify particular subject requirements. Individual schemes may set offer requirements above the minimum pass level. These may vary from year to year. Grades may be set for a specific subject. GCSE qualifications or equivalent may be required at the point of application and where this is part of the course criteria clear information will be provided on the University website. Normally, overall offers will be framed in terms of UCAS tariff points and or grades.

There is a wide range of acceptable entry qualifications, and this list is not designed to be exhaustive. It is designed to provide a sample of some of the main qualifications that applicants present for entry. Applicants are advised to contact the Course Enquiry Centre if they have any specific questions about qualifications that do not appear on this list. Please also refer to the UCAS tariff table at www.ucas.ac.uk for the latest range of qualifications that may be considered for entry.

More detailed information on specific entry qualifications and criteria is available from the University prospectus, course information, UCAS entry profiles, University website or admissions office.

The University is committed to widening participation and seeks to actively encourage applications from those currently under-represented in Higher Education. To support this aim the University can use discretion to vary entrance requirements and in cases where the general requirement cannot be met but where it considers that an applicant possesses the necessary attributes to undertake undergraduate or other study, admission may be made at discretion of the Admissions Manager and relevant academic colleagues.

The University welcome applicants who hold alternative qualifications/experience different to those shown in this section who can demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and show their potential to complete the course successfully. Although recent preparatory study at an appropriate level is recommended, students may be considered on the basis of prior evidenced professional/work experience and/or diagnostic assessment procedures, and the assessment of personal suitability. University Admissions office staff will be able to offer information, advice and guidance on this process.

1.1 Level 3 Qualifications

The minimum requirement is a 120 credit/720 GLH (Guided Learning Hour) Level 3 qualification profile, which can comprise of the following most common qualifications:

- Two A level subjects
- One A level plus one 60 credit/360 GLH level 3 qualification
- One full 120 credit/720 GLH qualification
- Two 60 credit/360 GLH qualifications (or One Access to HE Diploma (60 credits)
- Two Advanced Highers
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma/National Extended Diploma (first taught from September 2016)
- Advanced Diploma qualifications
- OCR National Awards
- One T Level

1.2 GCE A Levels and AS Levels

Normally a minimum of two GCE A Level passes. AS levels equate to 40% of an A level. The minimum general entry requirements are therefore satisfied as follows:

2 A levels

All A level subjects are acceptable including General Studies. However, subjects should be distinct and not have overlapping content.

1.3 BTEC

Appropriate BTEC HNC/HNDs can be considered for advanced entry to year 2 or 3. Qualifications will be expected to have the relevant subject content to the intended degree course applied for and be completed within the last 5 years.

1.4 Ordinary National Certificates and Diplomas.

In ONC and OND examinations a pass with (normally) at least two marks of 60% or more in the final examinations is required. A Pass in HNC or HND is acceptable.

1.5 NVQ Level 3

Applicants offering NVQ Level 3 (taken before 2014) will be considered and may be asked to complete supplementary work. NVQ Level 3's post 2014 will be considered alongside another Level 3 qualification. Similarly Technical Certificates for those following Advanced Apprenticeships will be considered on an individual basis, with particular reference to relevance to the intended course at the University.

1.6 Scottish Certificate of Education

Four* higher grade passes as least Grade C are regarded as the minimum entry requirements. Advanced Highers are deemed equivalent to A levels.

*Exceptionally three passes in SCE Highers and a good background in National 5s may be deemed to satisfy the general entrance requirement.

1.7 Irish Leaving Certificate

Four to five higher/honours grade passes at Grade C2/H4 are required.

1.8 International Baccalaureate/Diploma and European Baccalaureate

A minimum score of 24 points is necessary in the International Baccalaureate and a minimum score of 60% in the European Baccalaureate. Higher entry levels may be set for some courses Individual elements of the International Baccalaureate attracting UCAS Tariff Points can be used to meet the standard entry requirements.

1.9 Access Courses

Successful completion of a relevant QAA recognised Access to HE Diploma course is acceptable. This includes, for example, ACCESS programmes validated by recognised Authorised Validating Agencies (AVAs), such as Ascentis, the National Open College Network (NOCN). Specific grades may be stipulated in graded level 3 modules.

1.10 Open University

One foundation level credit fulfils the equivalent of one A level requirement.

1.11 Professional Qualifications

Professional qualifications in Nursing (RGN, RNM, RNMH, RSCN, RCN, RM) satisfy the general entry requirements. Other qualifications deemed by a professional body to be at a standard equivalent for entry to Higher Education will be considered on an individual basis.

1.12 Music Qualifications

A grade VIII Associated Board qualification is acceptable as equivalent to one 'A' level in Music and is now recognised within the UCAS Tariff table. A grade VI or VII Associated Board qualification may be used as supplementary evidence in a case of exceptional admission. Performance and theory examined at interview may be used as supplementary evidence in a case of exceptional admission.

In certain cases, a Grade VIII Associated Board qualification may be acceptable in lieu of an 'A' level where a candidate does not intend to take Music in the degree; such cases must, however, be categorised as an 'exceptional admission'. From 2004 entry Associated Board passes at Grades 6, 7, 8 b e c a m e eligible for UCAS tariff points. Points for the highest grades for each of theory and practical may be aggregated. These will be in addition to points awarded for AS or A level Music.

1.13 Art

In addition to an 'A' level other than Art:

- A body/portfolio of work assessed at interview, together with supporting references, may be considered with a view to establishing equivalence to an 'A' level in Art: such cases will be categorised as an 'non-standard or exceptional admission'
- The numerous College of Art courses leading to qualifications below diploma level require scrutiny and should not be accepted automatically as being equivalent to an 'A' level pass.
- A pass in a Diploma in foundation studies (Art & Design) course should be deemed equivalent to 2 x 'A' level passes.

1.14 NCFE CACHE Technical Level 3 Diplomas / Extended Diplomas (CACHE) awards.

Other CACHE awards accredited at Level 3 may be considered in part- fulfilment of the general entry requirement. Selectors will have regard to the length of such courses and the volume of learning/credit they attract.

1.15 T Levels

T levels may be considered for entry and meeting the general entry requirements for undergraduate programmes. Specific T Levels and routes may be required for some programmes with subject specific criteria.

1.16 Other qualifications at Level 3

These may be considered as satisfying the general entrance requirements subject to the guidance on the equivalence to two A qualifications as in UK Qualifications for Entry to Higher Education.

1.17 International Qualifications

International students will need to demonstrate evidence of study at a level equivalent to the general entry requirements. These will be in accordance with UK ENIC Guidelines on international qualifications and skills.

English Language requirement for international students

The following qualification satisfies the English Language requirements for admission. Scores will vary depending on the level of the programme and type of programme applied for and to comply with UKVI Student Route visa requirements. *The University website will provide the most up to date information.*

- IELTS (International English Language Testing System – academic version)
- University of Cumbria Password English Test
- NCUK English Test
- C1 Advanced (Certificate in Advanced English)
- C2 Proficiency (Certificate of Proficiency in English)
- TOEFL IBT
- Pearson Test of English Academic

2. Entry Requirements to Other Awards

2.1 Integrated Foundation Year

Candidates must be able to show evidence of competence in English Language (other GCSE requirements may be required for specific courses). Entry will be permitted to students with a minimum of A level or equivalent. Applicants must meet the minimum UCAS tariff point criteria for that subject. Applicants with a break in study or non-standard qualifications may be expected to undertake an interview and pre-entry assessment to ensure they are equipped to study.

2.2 Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)

Candidates must be able to demonstrate evidence of competence in English Language and of a wide range of study at GCSE level. Entry will be permitted by students with two A levels or equivalent plus evidence of recent study in an additional subject to a similar level.

2.3 Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)

The Certificate of Higher Education may be an exit point award from a degree or a DipHE course. Students are registered for their final award aim and must satisfy the entry requirements for that award.

Where the Cert HE is an award aim which also provides progression to DipHE or to a degree, the entry requirements for standard entrants for the DipHE will normally apply to the Cert HE, viz: one GCE A level or equivalent, plus evidence of recent study in an additional subject to a similar level.. For students returning to education who do not hold standard qualifications entry may be agreed following an interview and written piece of work, and subject to satisfaction of other criteria set out in the Admissions Policy. Certificate of Higher Education as an Award Aim per se
Where the Cert HE is a free-standing award aim, with no direct progression to a Dip HE or a degree in the same programme, entry requirements will be determined by the validation arrangements. This will normally be as for the Dip HE (see above), but where the Cert HE is designed for a specific professional group, admission may be on the basis of significant, relevant experience in the area, demonstration of the ability to benefit, plus any academic requirements necessary to satisfy the criteria of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (if/where appropriate).

2.4 Foundation Degrees

The University general entry requirements for the FdA / FdSc correspond with the internal benchmarks for Cert HE / Dip HE standards. For standard entrants, entry to the FdA / FdSc will be based on evidence of ability in written English and evidence of a range of study which may include one subject at A level or equivalent (i.e. Typically 40 – 64 UCAS tariff points equivalence).

For non-standard entrants who do not hold Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) qualifications, entry may be agreed exceptionally via a portfolio or following diagnostic assessment, and subject to satisfaction of other criteria set out in the Admissions Policy.

And/or

Where the FDEg is designed for a specific professional group, admission may be on the basis of significant professional experience in the area, demonstration of the ability to benefit from, and the potential to complete, the course, plus any academic requirements necessary to satisfy the criteria of professional bodies, if appropriate. This may be via portfolio or diagnostic assessment as above.

2.5 Graduate Certificate/Diploma

Applicants must normally hold an Honours degree (Minimum Class 2:2) of a recognised university or comparable institution or must in other ways be qualified to be regarded by the University as equivalent to such graduates. Where the course has a professional focus, candidates may be required to demonstrate competence as prescribed by the relevant professional body.

2.6 Professional/Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

Normally an Honours degree with a Grade II ii (or above) classification is required. GCSE Grade C/4 in English Language and Mathematics is required. For Primary PGCE GCSE Grade C/4 in English, Maths and Science is required.. For Secondary PGCE (1 year) 50% of the content of the degree should normally be related to the subject to be taught. Recognised degree equivalents in qualifications obtained through the examinations of professional bodies will be considered on an individual basis. The PGCE course has a range of pathways some of which has specific entry requirements and grades. Please refer to course specific literature for further details and additional information.

2.7 Post Graduate Certificate (PgCert), Post Graduate Diploma (PgDip), Masters Awards

Applicants must normally hold an Honours degree (Minimum Class 2:2) of a recognised university or comparable institution, or must in other ways be qualified to be regarded by the University as equivalent to such graduates. Where the course has a professional focus, candidates may be required to demonstrate competence as prescribed by the relevant professional body.

Additional entry requirements may be required. Candidates who do not meet the main entry requirements but are able to demonstrate significant other relevant skills of working at PG level may be considered on an individual basis and would receive an interview to determine academic readiness for the course. They might also be required to complete an appropriate piece of work, submit a portfolio of evidence, or undertake a single Level 7 module. More detailed information on specific entry qualifications and criteria is available from the prospectus and other course information or via the admissions office.

2.8 Research Degrees

Applications are considered by the Head of Research & Head of the Graduate School on the basis of an application and a research proposal. Candidates will normally be graduates (or equivalent) with a class II i degree or better.

2.9 University Minor Awards

(University Advanced Diploma, University Diploma, University Certificate, STAC, Certificate of Achievement)

There are no general entry requirements for Minor Awards unless stated otherwise. However, at the time of validation or designation, each award may set pre-requisite standards that are appropriate to the subject matter, and which constitute the necessary level of preparation for that level of study. Registration on minor awards does not imply eligibility for admission to any other programme. However, satisfactory completion of such awards may contribute to the consideration of a candidate's eligibility for entry onto another programme of study.

2.10 Top-up Degree

A minimum of 240 credits, 120 credits each at levels 4 and 5 or equivalent is required in a relevant subject.

2.11 Bachelor Degree Programmes

A minimum of 2 x A levels or equivalent is required. Candidates must also be able to demonstrate competence in English Language and have evidence of a wide range of study at GCSE level or equivalent, including where appropriate portfolios of work.

2.12 Collaborative Provision Students

Students must satisfy and be recruited based on the admissions criteria agreed by the University. The Partner will be responsible for the selection of students adhering to the criteria agreed in the validation.

2.13 Degree Apprenticeships

Apprentices must satisfy both the entry criteria for the standard and also the University of Cumbria entry criteria for the particular Apprenticeship. These will differ depending on subject and level.