

Online Postgraduate Taught Programmes Admissions Policy

1. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to applications for University of Liverpool online postgraduate programmes offered in conjunction with the University's partner organisation, Laureate Online Education.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy is intended to provide information for applicants and for staff within the University of Liverpool and Laureate Online Education with responsibility for admissions, on the principles which we apply to applications for online postgraduate study at the University. It outlines the University's approach to a number of matters relating to the processing of applications and the decision whether or not to make an offer of a place, and explains the context within which the admissions process operates.

3. National and Legal Context

Our approach to admissions takes into account the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

In addition to the statutory duties imposed by the Equality Act, the University is also guided by the principles set out in a number of Government-led reviews of Higher Education, and in particular the Report of the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group, chaired by Professor Steven Schwartz ('the Schwartz Review'), published in September 2004. Although the Schwartz Review focused on admissions to undergraduate programmes, the principles of fair admissions which it established apply equally to postgraduate admissions and our policy is therefore guided by the principles articulated within it. The Schwartz Review is available online at: www.admissions-review.org.uk/

Our admissions policy complies with chapter B2 of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education on recruitment, selection and admission to higher education. The Quality Code is available online at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/Quality-Code-Part-B.aspx>

We are committed to promoting an environment which:

- Recognises and values people's differences
- Capitalises on the strengths those differences bring to the institution
- Supports all staff and students in maximising their potential to succeed

More detail about the ways in which we positively promote equality and diversity may be found in the Diversity and Equality of Opportunity Policy, available at: www.liv.ac.uk/diversity-and-equality/policies/

4. University Context

We are committed to excellence in admissions, and to ensuring that our procedures adhere to the principles of fairness and transparency described in the Schwartz Review and the QAA Code of Practice. We welcome applications from all candidates with the potential to succeed on our programmes. Our admissions practices are designed to ensure that applications are considered on the basis of the applicants' achievements and potential to complete successfully their chosen course of study.

In order to ensure that we meet this commitment to excellence, and to enhance our professionalism, we provide all staff involved in admissions with regular training and updates both on our internal policies and procedures and on the principles of transparency and fairness in admissions decision-making.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

We undertake to respond to applications efficiently, courteously and in a timely manner. Members of staff in the **Admissions Team** make decisions on individual applications for most programmes, applying criteria established by the **Directors of Studies**. The **Enrolment Advisors** are able to advise prospective students on admissions matters, including the provision of on the non-UK qualifications which may be acceptable for entry. Further information is available at www.liv.ac.uk/international/

The **Head of School** is responsible for the integrity of the admissions process in his or her School. He or she appoints admissions staff and takes responsibility for ensuring that they understand and support the principles of fair admissions set out in this document. The Head of School is also responsible for determining the academic requirements appropriate for entry to his or her School. The Head of School devolves responsibility for making decisions on individual applications either to the Director of Studies or the Enrolments Team.

The **Directors of Studies** take responsibility for monitoring the progress of recruitment and admissions activities in order to achieve the target admissions intake numbers for the programmes for which they are responsible.

6. Principles and Entry Requirements

6.1. General Admissions Principles

We believe in treating applicants as individuals and in making offers which are appropriate to their personal circumstances and background. For this reason, admissions staff may take into account a range of factors, both academic and non-academic, in assessing applicants' merit and potential. This means that applicants for the same course may receive a different decision depending on their individual circumstances (e.g. professional experience).

Applicants should be aware that entry to many of our courses is very competitive, and the achievement of the degree classification and other requirements indicated in the entry requirements for any of our programmes does not, in itself, guarantee an offer of a place. Admissions staff may take into account a range of factors in assessing suitability for their programmes including, but not limited to, interviews, work experience, assessment of the Motivational Statement, etc. All applicants will also be expected to provide evidence of their proficiency in English.

6.2. Entry Requirements

Precise entry requirements will vary from course to course, depending on the nature of the programme and the level of competition for places. The normal minimum entry requirement would be a UK upper second-class degree or equivalent, although in certain circumstances students may be accepted with a

lower second-class degree or equivalent. Some courses will require that your first degree is in a related discipline and others will accept students from any academic background.

Some of our programmes will consider applicants who have not previously studied at level 6 or 7 in the National Qualifications Framework. Where an applicant presents without previous Higher Education study, we will consider relevant work experience and work-based qualifications in arriving at an admissions decision.

6.3. English Language Qualifications

All students at the University of Liverpool are expected to be able to demonstrate proficiency in English, normally demonstrated by holding a satisfactory English language qualification.

Students from the UK will normally be expected to have a GCSE in English at grade C or above, or an equivalent qualification.

For students whose first language is not English, the University's minimum requirements are the IELTS test with a minimum overall score of 6.0, and no less than 5.5 in each of the sub-tests (reading, writing, speaking and listening). This is the **minimum** requirement for admission to the University and many of our programmes will require higher scores than this, and may also require higher specific grades in each of the sub-tests.

Full details of the University's English language requirements and tests which satisfy our entry requirements may be found on our website at: www.liv.ac.uk/study/international/countries/english-language/

Students from some majority English-speaking countries are not required by UK Visas and Immigration to demonstrate a formal qualification in English in order to obtain their visa. The list of countries concerned is attached as Appendix 1. However, our academic Schools may still require applicants from these countries to provide an IELTS test score or other satisfactory qualification to demonstrate their proficiency in English and ability to cope with the linguistic demands of their course.

7. Making an Application

7.1. Application Form and Documentation

To enquire about an online programme, potential applicants should fill in and submit a 'Request Information' form. An Enrolment Consultant from the University's online partner will then contact the applicant to discuss their goals: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/study/online/how-to-apply/>

Following an initial discussion, the Enrolment Consultant will direct the applicant to the online application form. As part of the application process the applicant may be asked to provide some additional documentation. Until this is received it may not be possible to decide whether to make an offer, so it is very important this information is provided as soon as possible after submitting the online application form.

Examples of additional documentation that may be required are:

- Evidence of educational and / or professional qualifications
- Transcripts of academic record

- English Language Qualifications
- A letter of recommendation

7.2. Incomplete Applications

If an application is submitted that is incomplete, the University will use its discretion in deciding whether or not to consider the application. If there is sufficient information available, it may be possible to make a conditional offer which is subject to the provision of additional evidence. However, the University reserves the right not to consider incomplete applications.

7.3. Application Decisions

When all of the required documentation has been provided and the initial checks have been carried out, the application will be passed to the member of staff responsible for making decisions for the particular programme.

Depending on the programme, the person making the decision on the application may be a member of staff in the academic School offering the programme or a member of staff in the central Admissions Team. In both cases, staff will be working to the same criteria, established by the School and monitored by them.

The length of time it will take to process the application and arrive at a decision will depend on whether the academic School concerned requires additional information. If there are no additional selection procedures or discussions required, it is likely that a decision will be made within 48 hours (working days) of receipt of the application and all of the supporting documentation. If the applicant fails to submit all of the required documentation with the completed application form, this could lead to a significant delay in making a decision on the application. It is very important, therefore, that applicants submit all of the supporting documentation at the earliest possible opportunity.

7.4. The Decision Process

Depending on the programme applied for, the application may be considered on the basis of the information provided in the application form and supporting documentation, or the applicant may be required to provide additional evidence of such things as relevant work experience, or submit a piece of work for consideration.

Some of the programmes (e.g. the online MBA) require a period of relevant professional experience. Full details of any requirements for work experience may be found under the relevant programme at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/study/online/programmes/>

7.5. Withdrawal of Offers

All offers are made by the University in good faith on the basis of information provided by the applicant. The University reserves the right to withdraw an offer if it has justifiable grounds for doing so.

7.6. Unsuccessful Applications

If the applicant does not meet the criteria for making an offer of a place, an unsuccessful decision will be recorded and the applicant notified as soon as possible.

If an application is unsuccessful, the reasons will be recorded and, upon request, feedback will be provided to the applicant. Because of the volume of applications dealt with, it will not be possible to enter into prolonged discussion as to how the application may be improved in the future, but it may be possible to provide an indication of why the application was not successful on this occasion.

If an application has been unsuccessful, it is only possible to re-submit this *if there is additional information the applicant wishes to be considered that was not available at the time of the original application*. Any decision to permit the re-submission of applications will be at the discretion of the academic School, who will take into account both the nature of any additional information provided and the number of applications already received for their programme.

7.7. Validity of Offers

Applicants who have been made an offer of a place and who wish to delay their entry may be permitted to do so up to a maximum duration of three years. However, it should be noted that there may be occasions when it is not possible to offer a programme at any given time.

In some cases, the University may continue to offer a programme, but its content may be significantly different from the original description of the programme and its modules.

7.8. Authenticity and Accuracy of Applications

By submitting an application, applicants confirm that the information they provide, and any accompanying documentation supporting their application, is true, complete and accurate. Applicants who misrepresent or provide false information about themselves risk immediate rejection or the withdrawal of a previous acceptance onto a programme, which may result in termination of studies.

Where an applicant is required to submit a motivational statement as part of their application, the statement should be an original piece of work written by the applicant and, as such, is subject to online plagiarism checking. Any statements which are identified as containing text copied from other sources shall result in the application either being rejected or put into pending status with a request for a new, original, statement from the applicant.

7.9. Applicants who are in debt to the University

Students applying for an online postgraduate programme who have previously studied at the University of Liverpool and have left with an unpaid debt will be required to make arrangements for the repayment of that debt before they can be accepted.

8. Data Protection

By submitting an application you are giving permission to the University to process your personal data for the purposes of managing the University's selection and admissions procedures and for the University to use this data for maintaining its student records. This information is also used to make statutory returns to bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

The University complies with the Data Protection Act (2001) with regard to handling applicant data. However, applicants and their referees should note that, under the Data Protection Act, letters of recommendation submitted with applications are part of the applicant's personal data and will be released upon request by the applicant upon payment of the appropriate fee.

9. Admissions Complaints and Appeals

Although the University strives to maintain the high standards that we set ourselves in dealing with admissions, we recognise that things do sometimes go wrong and that applicants may feel that they have grounds for a complaint or an appeal.

For the purposes of this policy, an **appeal** is defined as a request by an unsuccessful applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision. Such appeals will normally be allowed only if there is evidence of a material irregularity in the decision-making process.

A **complaint** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the way in which the University's admissions policies or procedures have been applied to reach an admissions decision.

Please note that a complaint or appeal which merely seeks to dispute the academic judgement of the selector will not be allowed.

Further information on the University's Complaints and Appeals procedure may be found at www.liv.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/applying/admissions_complaint_policy.pdf

Appendix 1 - Majority English-speaking countries

Nationals of the following countries which are deemed by the UK Home Office to be majority English-speaking are not required by UK Visas and Immigration to demonstrate a formal qualification in English in order to obtain their visa:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Australia
- The Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belize
- Canada
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Jamaica
- New Zealand
- St Kitts and Nevis
- St Lucia
- St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Trinidad and Tobago
- United States of America