

UCO Policy and Procedure

UCO HE Admissions Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction

This Admissions Policy outlines the principles and procedures in place relating to student admissions to University Campus Oldham, Higher Education at Oldham College (UCO). The policy ensures a fair, transparent, and inclusive admissions process that aligns with both the Oldham College’s strategic objectives and mission. The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity on the criteria, procedures, and support mechanisms available to applicants.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with best practices and relevant legislation, such as UCAS Policies¹ and best practices². UCO also follows the guidelines within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines³ and acknowledges the Equal Opportunities Risk Register⁴.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all applicants seeking admission to undergraduate, postgraduate, professional courses, and short courses at University Campus Oldham. This does not include Access courses.

This policy applies to all staff responsible for or involved in the admissions process, including but not limited to; the HE Management Team, HE Course Leaders and Academic Tutors, HE Student Support Services, and the Marketing Team.

3. Principles

University Campus Oldham is committed to:

- Ensuring fairness, transparency, and consistency in admissions decisions to promote equal opportunities.
- Encouraging applications from a diverse range of backgrounds, including underrepresented groups.
- Adhering to relevant UK legal and regulatory frameworks, including the Equality Act 2010 and Office for Students (OfS) requirements.
- Providing clear and accessible information to applicants about entry requirements and application procedures.

¹ [UCAS' Policies](#)

² [UCAS Admissions Good Practice](#)

³ [CMA – Undergraduate Students – your rights under consumer law](#)

⁴ [Equality of Opportunity Risk Register](#)

4. Entry Criteria

University Campus Oldham sets standard entry requirements for each course, subject to the regulations of the awarding bodies. Entry requirements are reviewed by the HE Curriculum Management Panel, in conjunction with academic teams. Any changes to entry requirements or course titles need to be approved by the Curriculum Management Panel.

Applicants must meet the specific academic and non-academic entry requirements for their chosen course, such as:

- Academic qualifications (e.g., A-levels, BTECs, international equivalents for undergraduate entry; bachelor's degree for postgraduate entry).
- Any additional course-specific requirements, such as portfolios, work experience, or admissions tests.
- Successful interview.
- Consideration of non-traditional qualifications or professional experience, where appropriate, through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The entry criteria for each course can be found through UCAS, the UCO website, and the UCO Prospectus. Printed materials including prospectuses are published in advance of the academic year to which they relate; while they will be accurate at the time of print, they may not reflect the most up-to-date entry requirements or course content. UCO endeavours to ensure online course listings are accurate and up-to-date; prospective students are therefore encouraged to check the UCO website prior to application to ensure they have accessed the most up-to-date information.

Where courses include interviews, portfolio submission or auditions as part of their selection criteria we will make this explicit to applicants, and provide details on how the interviews will be conducted and the criteria used to select successful candidates.

5. Application Process

UCO is committed to providing a professional admissions process in order to provide the best service to both applicants and to the institution. The HE Student Services Team will use the standard entry requirements for each course to screen applicants and to issue either an offer or a rejection. If there is any doubt about a particular applicant's suitability for a course, the HE Student Services Team will refer the application to the relevant Academic Team. A decision will then be made in liaison between the HE Student Services Team, the Academic Team, and the HE Management Team, where necessary. Decisions are based on academic merit, personal statements, references, and other selection criteria to maintain quality standards.

It is the responsibility of applicants to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify UCO of any changes or corrections to the original application. All applications must include required supporting documents (e.g., certificates, references, personal statements) to provide a full picture of the applicant's suitability.

Shortlisted candidates may be invited for interviews, auditions, or assessments where relevant, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation.

a. Applying Through UCAS

If an applicant is applying to more than one institution through UCAS, they should submit their application/s to UCO through their options via UCAS.

b. Applying Directly to UCO

If an applicant is not applying to any other institution, and plans only to apply to UCO, they may complete a Direct Application Form via the Oldham College app.

c. Applying for PGCE pre-service (Lifelong Learning)

To apply for PGCE pre-service (Lifelong Learning) you should use the Gov UK Apply for teacher training Service - <https://www.apply-for-teacher-training.service.gov.uk/>.

d. Applying as a Student Already Enrolled at Oldham College

If an applicant is already enrolled on a course at the Oldham College (including UCO), and is not applying to any other institution, they may complete a Progression Form.

6. Admissions Decisions

Once an admissions decision has been made, applicants will be notified of the outcome via UCAS, Apply for teacher training Service, or direct communication from UCO. Offers may be conditional or unconditional, depending on an applicant's qualifications and readiness for the course. An offer, whether conditional or unconditional, will be made in good faith considering information as supplied by the applicant. In some circumstances, an offer may be conditional upon non-academic requirements e.g., a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check or a health assessment. Once an applicant has met their academic and non-academic conditions, UCO will be in a position to confirm their place.

UCO will consider each and every application on individual merit. Any details of extenuating circumstances provided by an applicant will be considered as part of the admissions process. Applicants who have not met the required grades and/or other entry requirements are reviewed and their place on the course may be confirmed at UCO's discretion, although no guarantee is made that this will be possible. In some cases, where an applicant has applied for one course and is not successful, an alternative course may be offered. Any alternative offer will be officially communicated and applicants will be contacted by UCO to confirm and discuss a changed offer decision.

By accepting an offer of admission, the applicant agrees to abide by the rules, regulations, and Terms and Conditions of UCO and its awarding partners.

7. Fraudulent Statements/Omissions and Plagiarism

All applicants are expected to provide accurate and honest information in their applications. Any attempt to submit fraudulent qualifications, plagiarised personal statements, or misleading information, may result in the withdrawal of an offer or exclusion from the admissions process. This ensures the integrity and credibility of admissions decisions.

8. Deferred Entry

Applicants may request deferred entry for up to one academic year, subject to approval by the admissions team. Deferrals are granted at the discretion of the institution and must be requested in accordance with the stated deadlines. Some courses may not allow deferrals due to specific course structures or professional accreditation requirements.

9. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

University Campus Oldham considers applications for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) based on prior academic and professional experience, in line with institutional and regulatory guidelines.

Applicants must submit supporting documentation, such as transcripts and portfolios, and may be required to complete an assessment to demonstrate their prior learning. This allows applicants to gain credit for previously completed studies or relevant work experience, reducing the duration of their course where appropriate.

Further information can be found in the [HE Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

10. Criminal Convictions Disclosure

Applicants who have unspent criminal convictions may be required to disclose this information as part of the admissions process. UCO will assess each case individually, considering the nature of the conviction, relevance to the course, and any potential safeguarding concerns. A fair and inclusive approach will be taken in line with applicable legal guidance. An interview/risk assessment may take place with the UCO Safeguarding Lead to ensure the safe and fair admission of an applicant with unspent criminal convictions.

A criminal conviction can become 'spent' after a period of time. The length of time it takes to become spent is defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and depends on the sentence or disposal made by the court following the conviction. Until that period has passed, the conviction is considered 'unspent'. Further information can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299916/rehabilitation-of-offenders-guidance.pdf

11. Procedures For Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

For certain courses, UCO is required to undertake a criminal record check of the applicant in conjunction with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS is a non-departmental public body of the Home Office, offering organisations a means to check the background of applicants to ensure that they do not have a history which would make them unsuitable for the training/employment they will be undertaking.

Disclosure checks are required for all students joining courses which lead to employment in areas involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, for example courses which are governed by professional regulatory bodies.

UCO reserves the right to exclude a student from the course should they have omitted to declare relevant information on a self-declaration disclosure form or DBS application.

Disclosure information will be:

- Passed only to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties, which may in certain circumstances include external agencies;
- Used only for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given;
- Stored separately and securely with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties;
- Destroyed by suitable secure means and not retained for longer than is necessary.

12. Disability and Mental Health Support

UCO welcomes applications from students with a disability and/or with mental health difficulties. We aim to ensure that all students can participate equally in both the academic and social life of the campus. Applicants who declare a disability and/or mental health difficulty are considered according

to the same principles as for other candidates. If made the offer of a place, applicants who have declared a disability or mental health condition will be contacted by the HE Student Services Team and asked to complete a questionnaire which enables them to discuss their likely requirements with the HE Disability and Wellbeing Team, to reduce any barriers that might confront them when seeking to study at UCO and provide appropriate support for their studies. A decision may need to consider any overriding health and safety concerns, barriers relating to professional body requirements or UCO's ability or inability to make any reasonable adjustments. In such instances, cases will be considered on an individual basis. It is important to note that support information will not be shared with UCO by another educational establishment unless this has been requested by the applicant and that it is the applicant's responsibility to inform UCO of a disability or mental health difficulty to ensure that the correct support can be facilitated to remove barriers to learning.

13. Care Experienced Students

UCO welcomes applications from care experienced students. If made the offer of a place, applicants who have made a declaration are contacted by the HE Student Services Team. The Course Administrator can signpost appropriate support as applicable, prior to entry and during the transition to study at UCO. UCO has a named contact for care experienced students with further information being available here - [Become - becomecharity.org.uk/propel/institution/oldham-college-the/](https://become-becomecharity.org.uk/propel/institution/oldham-college-the/).

14. Fees Policy

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, by email communications, and by post. Transparent communication ensures applicants understand their financial commitments before enrolment. The latest fees associated with each course can be found through UCAS, the UCO website, and the UCO Prospectus.

Further information can be found in the [Oldham College Fees Policy](#).

15. Widening Participation and Inclusivity

University Campus Oldham actively supports widening participation initiatives and considers contextual factors when assessing applications from underrepresented groups. This includes targeted outreach, scholarships, and additional support mechanisms to promote access to higher education.

Further information can be found in our [Access and Participation Plan](#).

16. Data Protection and Confidentiality

All personal data collected as part of the admissions process is handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and institutional data protection policies. Applicants' information is kept secure and used only for admissions and enrolment purposes.

Where applicants have given the names of third parties to act as a point of reference (referee), then it is assumed by UCO that the provision of this information gives UCO permission to contact the third party for further information in support of the application.

17. Appeals and Complaints

There is no right of appeal against a decision not to admit an applicant onto a particular course. However, applicants are entitled to know the reason(s) for their non-selection and to discuss these with a member of the Admissions Team or nominated representative for the course.

Complaints related to service quality will be handled in line with institutional complaints procedures. Complaints will not be considered if they relate to; matters of academic judgement regarding an applicant’s suitability to study, an applicant’s failure to satisfy non-academic requirements specified by external agencies for a particular course (except in respect of criminal records checks – these complaints will be considered), or if they are submitted anonymously.

18. Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure alignment with sector best practices and regulatory changes. Feedback from applicants and staff is regularly collected to refine and improve admissions procedures.

Impact of the Access and Participation Plan: Many students face unequal opportunities in higher education, which can affect them at every stage of their journey. To address this, the Office for Students has implemented the Access and Participation Plan, which includes the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR). The EORR highlights 12 sector-wide risks that could hinder a student’s ability to access and succeed in higher education. It asks institutions to assess which of their prospective or current students might be impacted by these risks and to consider strategies for mitigation. The College Access and Participation Plan Working Group (APWG) will monitor and report on these processes to the Curriculum Quality and Standards Committee and the Governors Curriculum and Quality Committee. The APWG will oversee implementation of actions to ensure ongoing progress against yearly milestones in our Access and Participation Plan. We will monitor impact on our target groups, to ensure we are addressing our aims. Where appropriate, we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students. We will use TASO’s Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) to measure and determine the impact of each intervention.

Further information can be found in our [Access and Participation Plan](#).

For further information, please contact the HE Student Services Team at info@uco.oldham.ac.uk.

Version History:

Issue	Changes	Author	Approved at	Date of Issue
1.1	Policy and Procedure Implemented	Directors of Learning	QIG / HE Executive Board	September 2012
1.2	Minor amendments made	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC	November 2014
1.3	Reviewed with minor changes	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC	September 2017
1.4	Reviewed with changes to Sections 14 & 20	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC	April 2018
1.5	Reviewed with minor changes Sections 8 and 19 -	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC	October 2018
1.6	Reviewed with minor changes Sections 2.2, 6, 7, 13 and 19 –	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC	April 2020
1.7	Reviewed with minor changes Sections 1, 6, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 23	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC	April 2022
2.0	Full Review of Policy and Procedure	HE Quality and Standards Manager	CQSC / Governors C&Q	June 2025
2.1	Information added on UK Apply for teacher training Service	HE Quality and Standards Manager	CQSC / Governors C&Q	April 2026

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