

# Contextual Admissions Policy

**Director, Future Students, Communications and  
Marketing**

**September 2023**



## 1 Introduction

UWE Bristol is a supportive place to learn an Inclusive University where diversity of experience and perspective is encouraged.

At UWE we believe that all young people should be given the opportunity to fulfil their full potential regardless of their background. UWE believes it is fair and appropriate to consider contextual factors as well as educational achievement, given the variation in learners opportunities and circumstances. We consider our learners as individuals and value the unique experience and perspective each bring to UWE, we want to understand these experiences prior to learners joining us to help build on our diverse student community and enhance the student experience.

UWE is committed to ensuring that its admissions policies and procedures are transparent, followed fairly, courteously, consistently, and expeditiously; that information concerning applicants remains confidential between designated parties, and those decisions are made by those equipped to make them.

## 2 Scope

The contextual admissions policy forms part of the UWE Admissions Policy and relates to the academic year 2023/2024.

This policy covers full time and part time, undergraduate, home applications for study at the university.

The policy is aimed at prospective students, applicants, school and college staff, higher education advisers and UWE's admissions and academic staff.

### 2.1 Glossary of Terms

UCAS	<a href="#">Universities and Colleges Admissions Service</a>
MEM	<a href="#">Multiple Equalities Measure</a>
QAA	<a href="#">The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education</a>
OfS	<a href="#">Office for Students</a>
UUK	Universities UK (United Kingdom)
POLAR	<a href="#">Participation of Local Areas</a>
IMD	<a href="#">Indices of Multiple Deprivation</a>
LTSEC UWE	Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee

## 3 General Principles

The policy and associated procedures comply with the relevant equality and diversity legislation affecting the admissions of students and take account of sectoral best practice, including the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Details of the QAA code are available here: [QAA- Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access](#)

The policy supports both the OfS condition B2: The provider must provide all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education and our commitment to fair access within the [UUK Fair admissions code of practice](#)

## 4 Contextual Admissions

### 4.1 What is Contextual Admissions

Contextual Admissions is the process by which UWE uses contextual data in the form of additional information about an applicant.

This information enables us to consider the applicant's potential to succeed in higher education in the context of the circumstances surrounding their personal and educational background. Information such as where a learner lives or which school they attended. This will give us a better picture of the individual rather than relying on exam results alone, providing us with the ability to make a more informed decision and creates a fairer more inclusive admissions process.

### 4.2 How is UWE using contextual data

Contextual information is provided via the UCAS application form when an applicant applies to study at UWE and will be flagged automatically when they come into our system. We will use a combination of contextual information during our decision-making process, these include:

The Multiple Equalities Measure (MEM) from UCAS, the measure brings together information on several equality dimensions for which significant differences in the probability of progression into higher education exist. These equality dimensions include sex, ethnic group, where people live (using the POLAR4 and IMD classifications), school type, income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) and income background (as measured by whether a person was in receipt of free school meals at age 15 (FSM)).

We will also be using the Widening participation questions identified by UCAS and provided via the UCAS application form, these are:

- Do you have any caring responsibilities?
- Are you a parent or do you have any parenting responsibilities?
- Do you have refugee status in the UK?
- Would you consider yourself estranged from your parents?
- Do you have a parent or carer that currently serves in the UK Armed forces, or who has done in the past?
- Have you ever served in the UK armed forces?
- Are you currently receiving free school meals, or have you been in receipt of free school meals during your secondary education?

As well as whether an applicant is over 21 years of age at the beginning of their undergraduate study.

Our contextual offer will be a tariff point reduction of 16 tariff points for all undergraduate degree courses and 8 tariff points for foundation year courses below the standard entry tariff points.

Details of our standard and contextual offer entry requirements are available on our course webpages.

The procedure includes receiving and processing electronic data from UCAS which in turn receives and processes electronic data from the examination boards. The University reserves the right to amend the offer in the light of an electronic error.

## 5 Further Guidance and Support

Further advice and guidance on the operation of this policy is available from the Head of Widening Access

For further information on entry requirements, general advice, or the University Admissions Policy contact:

Admissions Office  
 University of the West of England, Bristol  
 Frenchay Campus  
 Coldharbour Lane  
 Bristol  
 BS16 1QY  
 Tel: 0117 32 83333 or Email: [admissions@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uwe.ac.uk)

## 6 Ownership and Oversight

September 2023

Document name:	Contextual Admissions Policy
Version number:	V2.0
Equality Analysis:	15.09.2022

First approved by:	Academic Board October 2022
This version approved by:	Academic Board October 2023
Effective from:	September 2023
Next review date:	June 2024
Senior Policy Owner:	Director Future Students, Communication and Marketing
Policy Author:	Head of Widening Access
Overseeing committee:	Academic Board
Compliance measures:	Part of OfS APP monitoring by LTSEC annually
Related policies, procedures, and codes of practice:	Admissions Policy, Extenuating Circumstances Policy, Data Protection, Tuition fee, Safeguarding/Under 18's, Criminal convictions
Related legislative and/or regulatory requirements	Access and Participation Plan, OfS condition B2