



## Edinburgh Napier University Admissions Policy

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Edinburgh Napier University's Admissions Policy has been designed to support the attainment of the University Strategy 2020 in the following areas:

- **Grow our academic reputation** and admit those students with the potential to succeed on our challenging courses. In so doing we strive to **ensure our graduates are highly valued by employers and well prepared for successful careers**
- **Widen access and promote diversity** in the University, **working with local and international partners to ensure effective student transitions into the University**
- **Engage** and listen to our customers to gain feedback to continuously **improve our processes and communications with applicants**, ensuring all those who access our Admissions Service receive the highest quality of service.

1.2 This policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes of study and to part-time, full-time and distance-learning applications<sup>1</sup>. The policy covers applications received from UK and non-UK students.

1.3 Our Admissions Policy complies with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Code of Practice on Admissions and has been guided by the principles outlined in the Schwartz Report on Fair Admissions and good practice guidelines disseminated by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA).

## 2 Admissions Objectives

2.1 Edinburgh Napier University is committed to ensuring it is accessible to the widest body of students who can benefit from higher education. Through our Admissions Policy we aim to:

- 2.1.1 Ensure our applicants receive a responsive and customer-focussed service.
- 2.1.2 Admit students who have the potential to succeed and benefit from our programmes of study, thereby supporting student progression and success.
- 2.1.3 Widen access to higher education, working in partnership with schools, colleges, communities, and other HEIs to encourage applications from students from disadvantaged backgrounds; low

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<sup>1</sup> Separate guidelines will be developed for Overseas Delivered programmes, Continuing Professional Development programmes and Postgraduate Research programmes

participation neighbourhoods; those from schools with low numbers of student progressing to University; and Care Leavers.

- 2.1.4 Support industry-led, work-based learning.
  - 2.1.5 Promote equality of opportunity and diversity.
  - 2.1.6 Ensure our courses are accessible and capable of receiving articulating students at a variety of entry levels.
- 2.2 The University will achieve these objectives by ensuring that:
- 2.2.1 Our admissions procedures and policies are clearly documented and easily accessible.
  - 2.2.2 Decisions are made in line with clearly stated selection procedures and are applied consistently and fairly.
  - 2.2.3 Our selection assessment methods are reliable, valid and support the admission of students with the potential to succeed.
  - 2.2.4 Information relating to entry requirements is clear and transparent and subject to annual review through the formal academic reporting structure.
  - 2.2.5 Degree programme information provides applicants with relevant, accurate and up-to-date details which enables them to make an informed choice on the suitability of the programme for their needs.
  - 2.2.6 Applications are considered on an individual basis with reference to information in the application including academic achievements, personal statement and academic or work/personal reference.
  - 2.2.7 In line with the Equality Act 2010, all applications are given equal consideration.
  - 2.2.8 We process applications as quickly and efficiently as possible, if we require further information with which to make our decision we will contact applicants directly about this.
  - 2.2.9 All communication with applicants is carried out in a format appropriate to their needs.
  - 2.2.10 Offers of admission are communicated to applicants in clear and easy to understand language.
  - 2.2.11 We communicate effectively with our applicants throughout the admissions process, from receipt of application to matriculation, in

order that applicants are appropriately informed and prepared for commencing their studies.

2.2.12 We recognise the importance of providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants and are committed to providing this feedback on request.

2.2.13 All staff involved in the admissions process receive appropriate training and guidance to enable them to make decisions in a consistent and transparent manner.

2.2.14 We continually monitor and annually review our admissions procedures in order that our admissions service is responsive and customer-focussed.

2.2.15 We recognise the importance of established and developing partnerships with a broad spectrum of organisations, particularly the partnerships with Scotland's colleges, for the purpose of admission via recognised articulation routes

### **3 Roles and Responsibilities**

3.1 We have clear roles and responsibilities in relation to the admissions process.

3.2 All admissions entry criteria (UK and non-UK) is held within Admissions & International Support

3.3 Entry criteria is agreed for applicants with UK qualifications, and a mapping exercise then takes place to ensure non-UK (EU and International) entry criteria is mapped appropriately.

3.4 Where market research indicates the University may need to revise international entry criteria, the International Partnership Managers have responsibility for producing the business case for change. This is done in collaboration with Admissions & International Support, with final changes approved by the Schools.

3.5 Admissions entry criteria is subject to annual review and is agreed in discussion with each subject area (Academic School) prior to the start of each admissions cycle.

3.6 Entry criteria, once agreed, is approved by the Head of School (or nominee).

3.7 Factors which are taking into account during this annual review may include:

- Review of the University's SFC outcome agreement
- Review of the previous admissions cycle with regard to intake targets and achievements

- Review of any changes in the external environment, relating to admissions, for example curriculum and/or qualification changes
  - Identification of any current issues affecting 'on-programme students' which might indicate a change in entry criteria is required
- 3.8 The majority of admissions decisions are made centrally, by professional Admissions Assistants based within the Admissions & International Support Team, supported by Team Leaders.
- 3.9 Admissions Assistants are responsible for processing all centralised admissions decisions, in line with the entry criteria and selection process agreed with the Academic Schools.
- 3.10 Admissions & International Support is responsible to the Director of Student & Academic Services, who is responsible to the Vice Principal (Academic) for all aspects of admissions.
- 3.11 For those programmes where the selection process involves an interview, audition or portfolio review, admissions decisions are made within the relevant School by Admissions Tutors. The Head of School is ultimately responsible for these admissions decisions, although Admissions & International Support have an advisory role in ensuring consistency of decision making across these subject areas.

#### **4 Programme of Study Information**

- 4.1 Admissions entry criteria are available from the University website [www.napier.ac.uk/courses](http://www.napier.ac.uk/courses), prospectus and for undergraduate admission to full-time programmes, the UCAS website [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). This includes information related to English Language requirements, for those applicants whose first language is not English. Information provided is accurate, relevant and accessible and aims to provide applicants with the details they require in order to make an informed decision on their choice of programme of study.
- 4.2 We consider a wide range of qualifications for entry purposes. Where an interview, audition or portfolio forms part of the selection criteria, or where applicants are required to have work experience, we stipulate this in our prospectus, website and where applicable, on the UCAS website. Information about the interview process for specific programmes is available on request.
- 4.3 In addition to academic qualifications, all applicants must provide a personal statement which provides information on their academic background and general interests, including motivation for their chosen subject.
- 4.4 Applicants who do not meet the minimum academic criteria but who have significant and relevant experience in their chosen subject may be considered for entry.

## **5 Application Process (UCAS and Direct)**

- 5.1 Applications for full-time undergraduate degree programmes are made via the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Applications for all other programmes are made directly to the University using the Edinburgh Napier online application.
- 5.2 All applicants are sent an acknowledgement email confirming receipt of application and providing more information about the admissions process.
- 5.3 Where applicants have made more than one application to study at Edinburgh Napier, decisions may be made separately. We seek to process applications quickly and efficiently and will contact applicants directly if further information is required in order to make the admissions decision.
- 5.4 Deferred entry applications are welcome and are considered alongside all other applications received within the admissions cycle. Students must normally meet the conditions of their offer (where applicable) by 31<sup>st</sup> August in the year of application.
- 5.5 We welcome applications from students from all ages and do not operate any lower or upper age limit restrictions, recognising that a number of our students may be under the age of 18 when they start their studies.
- 5.6 We welcome applications from students seeking advanced entry to our programmes of study. All applications are considered on an individual basis, taking into consideration previous study and experience.
- 5.7 Advanced entry to full-time undergraduate degree programmes is offered to applicants with evidence of accredited prior learning, such as HNC, HND, Advanced Higher or A-level qualifications. Applicants who wish to be considered for advanced entry should state this clearly on their UCAS application, via the Point of Entry box and ensure sufficient information is included in the application to enable a decision on advanced entry to be taken.
- 5.8 In the majority of subject areas, the University offers direct articulation routes for students applying from College. This means applicants applying on the basis of an HNC should apply for Year 2 entry and those with an HND should apply for Year 3 entry.
- 5.9 In some subject areas, there are a limited number of funded places for advanced entry students coming from College and entry is highly competitive. As a result, in these subject areas, we are normally unable to consider College applicants with an HNC for entry to Year 1 or those with an HND to Year 2, unless there are strong mitigating circumstances. Further information can be obtained from the Undergraduate Admissions Team.

- 5.10 Advanced entry to postgraduate programmes may be considered for applicants holding relevant accredited prior learning such as a Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert).
- 5.11 Applicants may be offered alternative programmes of study if they do not meet the minimum entry requirements for their chosen programme.

## **6 Selection and Assessment Methods**

- 6.1 Centralised decisions are made in line with our selection procedures and decisions are monitored to ensure quality of decision making across programmes.
- 6.2 Our selection assessment methods are reliable, valid and support the admission of students with the potential to succeed. For the majority of programmes where centralised admissions decisions are made, the assessment of the application is based on
- Academic qualifications achieved and/or predicted
  - Interest in the subject area, demonstrated via the personal statement
  - Suitability for study, normally demonstrated via the academic reference
  - Consideration any relevant work and/or life experience as appropriate
- 6.3 Where admissions decisions are made de-centrally, in addition to the above information, applicants will also normally be assessed via an interview, audition or portfolio review.
- 6.4 Where an applicant is based outside of the UK and is unable to travel to attend this assessment, the Admissions Tutor has responsibility for ensuring alternative arrangements are made to assess suitability for study, thus ensuring parity across all applicants.
- 6.5 Where interviews are used to assess applicant suitability for study, these are carried out by trained staff with experience of interviewing applicants. Interviews may be carried out either individually or in a group environment. Applicants invited to interview are provided with information relating the format of the interview and how the interview will be assessed.
- 6.6 Where submission of a portfolio is used to assess applicant suitability for study, all applicants are informed in sufficient time of the specification for the portfolio and assessment methods used. For example, the criteria against which the portfolio is scored and the academic staff involved in the portfolio process.
- 6.7 Where an audition is used to assess applicant suitability for study, all applicants are provided with full information relating to the audition process such as what will be required from the performance; how the audition will be judged and by whom.

6.8 The Head of School has responsibility for ensuring interviews, auditions and portfolio reviews are carried out in a timeously, fair and consistent manner.

## **7 Decision Making**

7.1 Our published entry requirements are the minimum criteria accepted for entry. For competitive subject areas, where we receive more applications than we have places available, attainment of the minimum entry criteria does not guarantee an offer of admission.

7.2 Admissions decisions are made on an individual basis with full reference information in the application including academic achievements (predicted or achieved), personal experience and academic reference or work/personal reference. In addition special consideration may be given to the following groups of applicants, please see our Contextual Admissions Policy for further information:

- Applicants who are Care Leavers
- Applicants who are identified as Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS) eligible
- Applicants coming from Schools where low numbers of students progress to University study<sup>2</sup>
- Applicants coming from an area of deprivation as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)<sup>3</sup>
- HNC/HND applicants applying from a College with an articulation agreement with Edinburgh Napier.
- Applicants who are returning to study after an extended period outside of education, in particular those applying via a Scottish Wider Access Programme route (SWAP)
- Applicants who have suffered educational disruption or adversity which is deemed to have had a direct impact on their educational progress<sup>4</sup>
- Applicants with a declared disability

7.3 Applications are assessed on individual merit and applicants are strongly encouraged to provide as much information as possible in their application to ensure admissions staff are provide with sufficient information to make a decision.

7.4 Consistency of decision-making is monitored within Admissions to ensure parity across programmes. Where it is deemed that an offer cannot be

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<sup>2</sup> For undergraduate Scottish-domiciled applicants only

<sup>3</sup> For undergraduate Scottish-domiciled applicants only

<sup>4</sup> For example, where an applicant has suffered a bereavement, individual ill health, ill health of a close family member or where there has been serious disruption to their education. Circumstances are considered on an individual basis



made, the reason for this decision is recorded on the application to enable feedback to be provided on request.

- 7.5 Further guidance for applicants applying on the basis of SQA qualifications can be found within our *Curriculum for Excellence Statement*.

## 8 **Offers, Responses and Communication**

- 8.1 The University aims to process its applications quickly and efficiently. In order to do this we require applicants to ensure all sections of the application are completed. Where there is insufficient information to allow a decision to be made, we will contact the applicant and request additional detail.
- 8.2 Where an application requires an interview, portfolio submissions or audition the decision making process will take longer.
- 8.3 Edinburgh Napier University continues to accept and process applications following the 15<sup>th</sup> January UCAS deadline, subject to available places.
- 8.4 Where the programme of study applied for is a high demand subject area for full-time undergraduate study, we will not normally consider applications received after 15<sup>th</sup> January deadline. For such programmes we may need to hold the application until we receive all applications submitted by 15 January UCAS deadline. This ensures all applications submitted by 15 January receive equal consideration.
- 8.5 Where an offer of admission is to be made we aim to communicate the terms of the offer in clear and easy to understand language. Offer letters contain details of any action an applicant needs to take to accept the offer and provides information on the fee classification and anticipated fee levels for the programme.
- 8.6 Where an application has been unsuccessful, we seek to provide feedback on request.
- 8.7 Occasionally, changes may need to be implemented at short notice to course content or structure. Where such changes are deemed to impact significantly on the student experience of the programme, we will write to all applicants holding offers of admission to advise of these changes and where applicable, offer an alternative programme of study.
- 8.8 Applicants who choose to accept their offer of admission are sent additional welcome information prior to the start of semester, which provides essential advice and guidance to prepare students for the start of their studies.
- 8.9 The University also offers a number of induction programmes for students, aimed at easing the transition to University study. Workshops are available to a wide group of students, including those progressing from College and

international students progressing to the University. Further information can be found [here](#).

## 9 **Applicants with Disabilities**

- 9.1 The University welcomes applications from students with disabilities and seeks to ensure appropriate support arrangements and reasonable adjustments are made prior to students commencing studies. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to declare any disability on their application. This information is used only to identify support needs and is not part of the academic decision to make an offer of admission.
- 9.2 The academic decision to offer a place of study is made first. Following this decision, where an offer of admission is to be made, the application may be referred to the Disability & Inclusion Team, in order to assess any additional support needs prior to the student commencing studies.
- 9.3 The University will make every effort to ensure required support arrangements are in place. However, this is dependent on the student applying in sufficient time and identifying their disability clearly at the point of application.
- 9.4 See our *Policy for Applicants with Declared Disabilities* for further information.

## 10 **Care Leavers**

- 10.1 Research has shown that young people who have spent time in Local Authority care are likely to encounter many barriers to successful participation in Higher Education.
- 10.2 The University is therefore committed to increasing the proportion of applications and entrants from students who have spent time in care. Care Leavers are strongly encouraged to declare this as part of their application.
- 10.3 The University recognises the difficulties faced by this group of young people and as such aims to ensure care leavers accepted for study are offered additional support and advice. This includes the provision of year-round accommodation, irrespective of where the student is living and individual pre-entry support for any student who declares he/she has spent time in Local Authority Care.
- 10.4 See our *Policy for Care Leavers* for further information.

## 11 Criminal Convictions

- 11.1 The University welcomes applications from all sectors of the community. As part of the application process, applicants are asked whether they have a *relevant* criminal conviction<sup>5</sup>. Where an applicant ticks the box to indicate a *relevant* criminal conviction, the applicant is not excluded from the admissions process; however he/she is likely to be asked for further information relating to the offence.
- 11.2 The academic decision to offer a place of study is made first. Following this decision, where an offer of admission is to be made, the application may be referred to the University's Disclosure Assessment Panel, which has responsibility for assessing applicants with a relevant criminal conviction. A final decision on admission for such students is taken on an individual basis following consideration of the case by the Panel.
- 11.3 Some programmes, such as Nursing & Midwifery, are not covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as such applicants are required to apply to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme prior to commencing studies. This is a mandatory requirement to practise for all Nursing & Midwifery courses.
- 11.4 See our *Policy for Applicants with a Criminal Conviction* for further information.

## 12 Fraudulent Applications

- 12.1 All applicants have a responsibility to ensure the information submitted on their application is accurate and up-to-date. The decision to offer a place is based on the information contained in the application. Where it is discovered that an applicant has submitted incorrect or inaccurate information as part of their application, the University will investigate further and reserves the right to withdraw the offer of admission. The University also reserves the right to refer cases for further investigation (where applicable), for example for UCAS applications to the UCAS Verification Unit.
- 12.2 Information relating to qualifications held by the applicant and listed in the application form is subject to verification prior to enrolment taking place. Any discrepancy identified will be referred for full investigation.

## 13 Feedback, Appeals & Complaints

- 13.1 When requested, the University will provide feedback on unsuccessful applications, normally within 15 working days of the request being submitted.

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<sup>5</sup> Relevant Criminal Conviction is defined as offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, or offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant.

- 13.2 Requests for feedback should normally be made by the applicant themselves.
- 13.3 Feedback can be requested by contacting the relevant Admissions Team in writing ([Undergraduate Admissions](#) or [Postgraduate Admissions](#)).
- 13.4 Where the selection process involves an interview, audition or portfolio review, the feedback request will normally be forwarded to the relevant School/Admissions Tutor for response.
- 13.5 The University seeks to respond to requests for feedback within 15 working days.
- 13.6 Where an applicant wishes to appeal an admissions decision, they must normally do so within 30 working days of receiving notification of their original decision. There are strict criteria and timescales for students who wish to submit a formal appeal, and further information can be found in our *Policy for Feedback, Appeals & Complaints*
- 13.7 Since August 2013, all Scottish Universities and Colleges are required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to use an adaptation of their Complaints Handling Procedure. Further information about Edinburgh Napier University's Complaints policy can be found [here](#)
- 13.8 Applicants who wish to make a complaint regarding the way in which their application has been handled should email the relevant Admissions Team in the first instance, outlining the grounds of their complaint.

#### 14 **Data Protection**

- 14.1 Edinburgh Napier University will process all personal information supplied in the admissions process strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998). The University's Data Protection Code of Practice and advice on how to make a request for information under either the DPA 1998 or the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 is available [here](#)

#### 15. **Admissions Contacts**

- 15.1 The Admissions & International Support Team can be contacted on 0333 900 60 40 or by writing to Admissions & International Support, Student & Academic Services, Merchiston Campus, Edinburgh EH10 5DT or by email to the relevant team:

Undergraduate Admissions Team  
[ugadmissions@napier.ac.uk](mailto:ugadmissions@napier.ac.uk)

Postgraduate Admissions Team  
[pgadmissions@napier.ac.uk](mailto:pgadmissions@napier.ac.uk)