



HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

ADMISSIONS POLICY

November 2009

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(approved by Academic Board on 4 November 2009)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Harper Adams University College is a specialist higher education institution whose mission is 'higher education for the delivery of a sustainable food chain and rural economy'.
- 1.2 The University College aims to offer the highest quality courses, as measured by external assessment and competitive funding, and an outstanding student experience, with high levels of student retention, progression, completion and employment. The Admissions Policy supports these goals by providing equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of background, to gain admission to a course suited to their ability and aspirations.
- 1.3 The University College is committed to achieving an educational environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, religion or political beliefs, age, sexual orientation or social or economic background.
- 1.4 This Admissions Policy addresses the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005. The Policy is informed by the University College's codes of practice and policies on equal opportunities, data protection and widening participation.
- 1.5 The Policy is guided by the principles outlined by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group that a fair admissions system should:
 - be transparent
 - strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid
 - enable institutions to select students who are able to complete the course as judged by their achievements and potential
 - seek to minimise barriers for applicants
 - be professional in every respect and underpinned by appropriate institutional structures and policies.
- 1.6 The Policy complies with the QAA's Code of Practice on Recruitment and Admissions.
- 1.7 This Policy applies to the admission of students to the University College's undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research programmes. Its principles also apply to the admission of students to co-funded employer engagement programmes Harper Adams' and programmes delivered at Beijing Agricultural College. All staff with responsibility for the admission of students are required to comply with the Policy.

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADMISSIONS

- 2.1 The Academic Board receives an annual report on the admission of students to the University College.
- 2.2 The University College sets out its general entry requirements in the prospectus, its website and on the UCAS website. Course Teams determine specific entry requirements and these are approved at validation. Any course specific entry requirements are also identified in the University College's prospectus and website and UCAS' website and Entry Profiles.
- 2.3 The Academic Registrar has strategic responsibility for admissions to the University College. Operational responsibility is delegated to the Head of Admissions and Student Records.
- 2.4 The Registry is responsible for receiving applications from potential students, arranging interviews, informing applicants about the outcome of interviews, confirming offers of places in consultation with Course Teams and issuing joining instructions to new students.
- 2.5 Course Teams are responsible for interviewing applicants and Course Managers determine whether to offer a place on a course to an applicant.
- 2.6 Harper Adams University College runs courses in conjunction with Reaseheath College and Walford and North Shropshire College. On receipt, application forms are copied to the Registries at Reaseheath and Walford and North Shropshire Colleges, and applicants are normally invited to interview at these colleges. Course Teams will consider applications as set out in paragraphs 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.
- 2.7 Applicants to courses run in conjunction with Askham Bryan College, apply directly to the College which has responsibility for determining an applicant's suitability for a course.

3. ADMISSIONS PROCESS

- 3.1 The University College recognises its responsibility to identify the talent and the potential of applicants and to treat all applicants fairly. Talent and potential is not always fully demonstrated by examination results and consideration will be given to each applicant's experiences, skills and potential and how these contribute to the learning environment of the course and the wider student community.
- 3.2 All applicants who live in mainland Britain are normally invited for interview. All applicants for Veterinary Nursing courses are required to attend the College for interview.
- 3.3 In determining an applicant's suitability for a course, Course Teams will take into account:
 - (i) the applicant's potential to succeed in the selected programme of study;
 - (ii) actual or expected academic or professional qualifications and grades;
 - (iii) relevant work or other experience;
 - (iv) the applicant's own statements of interest in the programme;
 - (v) references (usually academic, but also professional where relevant to the proposed programme);
 - (vi) an interview or a sample of the applicant's work.

- 3.4 Applicants will normally be notified of the outcome of their application within two weeks of the interview.
- 3.5 Applicants will be sent joining instructions in July each year.
- 3.6 Applicants will be advised by the Registry of any significant changes to the status or content of a course such as a change in a professional body's recognition of a programme, a change in the award title or major changes to teaching, learning or assessment arrangements.
- 3.7 The University College reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants who have not met the entry thresholds or who cannot meet the academic or vocational requirements stated in the offer letter. Attempts will be made to offer an alternative course to applicants where possible.
- 3.8 Applications are welcomed from international applicants. Applicants must demonstrate a command of the English language and should possess a recognised English language qualification, at a level specified in the University College's prospectus and website. Overseas applicants are also required to pay a deposit to the University College before they can be issued with an unconditional offer for visa purposes.

4. MINIMISING BARRIERS TO ADMISSION

- 4.1 The University College accepts the full range of qualifications as the basis for admission, including GCE/GCE 'A' levels, AS levels, 14-19 Advanced Diplomas, BTEC National Diplomas and National Certificates, Scottish Highers, Irish Leaving Certificates, Access Qualifications, the European and International Baccalaureates and equivalent international qualifications.
- 4.2 The University College offers an Extended Foundation Degree programme which provides a progression route to higher education courses for students who do not possess the minimum entry requirements.
- 4.3 Certificated learning that has occurred as a result of study towards an award at another institution may be given general or specific credit towards a Harper Adams award if it matches the agreed learning outcomes. This may allow entry with advanced standing to a later stage of the course or exemption from individual modules. Academic credit may also be derived from the assessment of experiential learning. No more than half of the credit at any level may be derived from the assessment of experiential learning and at least one third of the credit for a Harper Adams undergraduate award and one half for a postgraduate award must be derived from Harper Adams modules.

5.0 APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIFIC LEARNING NEEDS

- 5.1 The University College is committed to achieving equal opportunities for all of its students and actively encourages potential students who may be disabled or have specific learning needs to make an application to study at Harper Adams. The University College seeks to provide an integrated service for students with a range of disabilities and aims to create a supportive environment in which improvements to services and facilities, and progress towards a fully inclusive environment, are constantly sought.

- 5.2 Applicants are sent details of the services provided by the Learner Support Unit. All applications from those with recognised disabilities will first be considered on their academic merits through the standard admissions process. The Learner Support Co-ordinator, with the applicant's consent, will liaise with the Registry, Examinations Office, Estates and Facilities, the Students' Union, Student Services and the relevant Course Manager.
- 5.3 If it is clear that there may be difficulties concerning admission to the applicant's chosen course, the Learner Support Co-ordinator will arrange to meet the applicant with the appropriate Course Manager. Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate an applicant's support needs, in exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to make the necessary adjustments to enable an applicant to be admitted to a particular programme of study. In such circumstances the University College will make every effort to provide a suitable alternative course. If that is not possible within the University College, it will advise the applicant on how best to pursue their academic studies elsewhere.
- 5.4 All applicants will be sent a Learner Support Self Assessment form to complete prior to registration with the University College. Applicants are strongly advised to return this form, indicating their disability and support needs if appropriate. All applicants with a disability will be invited to contact the Learner Support Co-ordinator to discuss their needs.
- 5.5 The Learner Support Team will meet all students during registration and student induction. This allows any students who have not previously made the University College aware of their disability or specific learning difficulty, the opportunity to make an appointment to discuss their support needs. During student induction, all students complete a dyslexia self-assessment questionnaire. Students are invited to undertake further screening if appropriate. Students may then progress to have a diagnostic assessment and, if appropriate, support arrangements would then be put in place.
- 5.6 The support and facilities available to students with disabilities is managed by the Learner Support Co-ordinator and includes:
- Adapted residential accommodation provision
 - A commitment to ensure that students with particular needs are provided with appropriate accommodation.
 - Adapted accommodation suitable for those with mobility difficulties or those who are blind, partially sighted, deaf or hard of hearing
 - Reserved parking for students, staff and visitors with disabilities

Further information about the support available is set out in the University College's Learner Support Policy.

- 5.7 The admission, retention and progression of students with disabilities is monitored annually.

6. APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

- 6.1 The University College requires all applicants with criminal convictions or charges pending to declare these at the point of application. Harper Adams does not automatically reject such applications and each case will be considered on its merits.

- 6.2 Where an applicant declares a criminal conviction on the application form, the Registry will write to the applicant and request information about the date of the conviction, the nature of the offence and sentence and invite any relevant comments from the applicant.
- 6.3 Following receipt of the information from the applicant, the Academic Registrar will determine whether the applicant should be considered for admission, and the conviction set aside, or whether an Admissions Panel should be established.
- 6.4 In those cases where the Academic Registrar decides that an Admissions Panel is necessary, the Head of Admissions and Student Records, the Vice Principal and the relevant Course Manager shall be invited to meet and determine if admission to the course should be denied on the basis of the conviction.
- 6.5 In making its decision the Admissions Panel must consider the University College's duty of care to its students and staff, and take account of:
- (i) the nature and seriousness of the offence;
 - (ii) when the offence was committed;
 - (iii) the circumstances of the offence;
 - (iv) the frequency of offences and whether the applicant has demonstrated subsequent good behaviour following the conviction.
- 6.6 The Admissions Panel may determine that it is necessary to interview the applicant but this may not always be appropriate.
- 6.7 Where admission to the University College is denied on the basis of the conviction, the applicant will be notified of the decision, and the reasons for doing so, by the Academic Registrar.

7. REVIEW OF ADMISSIONS DECISIONS AND COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 The University College always seeks to process applications carefully and efficiently and to assess each application on its merits. It is recognised, however, that an applicant might be dissatisfied, for example, about the way in which their application was processed or about a decision not to offer a place on a course.
- 7.2 Applicants who believe that their applications have not been handled appropriately through the admissions process should write to the Academic Registrar setting out the nature of their concerns.
- 7.3 Applicants who have not been offered a place on their chosen course should discuss their case with the Admissions Officer or the Course Manager who will explain why the application was unsuccessful. Applicants who remain dissatisfied with the Course Manager's explanation may also write to the Academic Registrar.

8. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 8.1 The successful recruitment and retention of students is a key strategic goal for Harper Adams and the University College is committed to the development and training of all staff, both academic and administrative, involved in the admissions process.

8.2 A programme of staff development will be arranged annually for administrative staff involved in the admissions process as well as newly appointed Course Managers and Senior Tutors.

Dr N Morrison
Academic Registrar

October 2009