POLICY TITLE	OVERARCHING ADMISSIONS POLICY
POLICY OWNER	DIRECTOR OF RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS
POLICY OPERATOR	UCC ADMISSIONS OFFICES
DATE APPROVED	21/10/2020

PURPOSE

This is a broad framework policy which sets out how University College Cork admits students and where the authority to do so is vested. The Policy covers the overarching general principles adopted by the University and underpins other policies and procedures relevant to the Admissions process.

SCOPE

University College Cork admits students to accredited programmes from NFQ level 6 to level 10 and also to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Modules. This Policy applies to applicants and UCC staff involved in the admissions process for UCC programmes/modules and CPD programmes/modules. This Policy does not currently apply to the Language Centre/Irish Management Institute (IMI) / Adult Continuing Education (ACE).

PRINCIPLES

UCC is a research-intensive, globally focused, internationally competitive knowledge institution that is committed to the civic role of higher education.[1] Our students and their learning experience are our highest priorities.[2] UCC aims to attract and retain an excellent and diverse cohort of students and our strong ethos of equality, diversity and inclusion for all is reflected in our admissions process.[3] Admission is subject to meeting minimum entry requirements and the availability of places. Offers are subject to the University's published Terms and Conditions Governing Offers of Admission.

Selection and Communication of Decisions - General Criteria

Requirements for specific programmes are published in:

- The UCC Admissions Office, Graduate Studies Office, and International Office webpages;
- The University Calendar;
- Prospectuses for Undergraduate and Graduate programmes;
- The Centre for CPD webpages will detail entry requirements of individual CPD modules. Where a CPD module exists as part of a degree programme, the entry and admission requirements will mirror that of the full degree programme. Where a CPD module is "stand-alone" (developed to be delivered outside of a degree programme), then that CPD module will have its own entry and admissions requirements. Offers of admission will be made in line with the general criteria

---

[1] Academic Strategy 2018-2022, p 7.
[2] Strategic Plan 2017-2022, p 24, 'Priority Actions 01'.
[3] Academic Strategy 2018-2022, p 24.

outlined within this document, related policies and any specific entry requirements for CPD modules.

As printed materials are produced well in advance of commencement of the programme, the website should be referred to for updated information about programme content and application criteria.[4]

In addition, the following apply to all applicants:

- **Age Requirements**: All applicants must normally have reached 17 years of age by the 15th January of the year following entry to UCC. Where a candidate below that age seeks to enter UCC, a special application for exemption from the age requirement must be made in writing to the Director of Recruitment and Admissions and should preferably be accompanied by a letter of support from the School Principal and a parent/guardian. The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, INIS, requires unaccompanied international students (i.e. non-EU) who are under 18 years of age to provide proof of guardianship in advance of registration.
- **English Language Requirements:** Teaching in UCC is normally through the medium of English, therefore all applicants are required to demonstrate a high level of competence in the English Language. UCC's minimum English language requirements are approved by Academic Council and apply to all applicants and all levels of study. Applicants whose first language is not English are required to produce evidence of proficiency in accordance with the UCC English Language Requirements which can be found at the following links:

    Undergraduate English Language Requirements

    Postgraduate English Language Requirements

Assessment of Applicants

Admission decisions are made by the relevant admitting authority in accordance with approved entry criteria, primarily on academic merit but may incorporate other factors.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- References
- An interview
- Submission of a curriculum vitae or résumé

---

[4] The information contained in UCC web pages is, to the best of our knowledge, true and accurate at the time of publication and is solely for informational purposes. Changing circumstances may cause the University to change its provisions at any time. UCC accepts no liability for any loss or damage howsoever arising as a result of use or reliance on these web pages or on the information thereon or in respect of information accessed via any links from the web pages.

- Submission of a portfolio of work

- Performance tests

- An additional external test score (e.g. GAMSAT/HPAT/MSAP)

- Relevant work experience

- Registration with a Professional body

- Submission of completed forms such as Site Declaration Forms, Practice Agreement Forms etc.

Applying for a place does not guarantee that an offer will be made. Where there are restrictions on the number of places that the University can make available, competition can often be extremely high. The University cannot fairly and consistently take account of any special circumstance affecting an applicant's performance in pre-entry qualifications. Such circumstance should be made known to the relevant examination body.

Latest Admission Date

Offers for taught programmes will issue on various dates, depending on the programme and cohort. The relevant admissions office will provide this information. Where a situation affecting the start-date arises for an applicant due to circumstances beyond their control, such as results that are received later than this date, a deferred offer may be issued. Where there are exceptional circumstances, the applicant must inform the relevant admissions office in writing, and the office will then advise on the latest available start-date for the programme, which will normally be within three weeks of the programme's start date. All offers are made subject to the Terms and Conditions Governing Offers of Admission.

Notification of Decisions

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application promptly after the decision is made. Offers are made with a specific timeline for acceptance. Offers which are not accepted or deferred (where a programme offers deferrals) by the acceptance date will lapse and may no longer be available to the applicant. Unsuccessful applicants may seek feedback on their application from the School, College or Unit responsible for the admissions decision. However, due to the high volume of applications, it may not always be possible to provide highly specific or tailored advice. Communication specific to an application will be conducted in line with our published GDPR policy.

Discretion to Refuse Admission

In addition to the policies listed herein, the University, in its absolute discretion, may refuse admission to an applicant where it believes that the applicant:

- has previously been excluded from the University for any reason;

- is currently indebted to the University or in default of payment of deposit (where applicable), tuition, or other required fees;

- has been excluded or had their enrolment cancelled at another Higher Education Institution (HEI);

- is deemed a non-genuine temporary entrant;

- may prejudice the reputation, management, governance or discipline of the University;

- has engaged in dishonest and/or deceitful behaviour in the process of applying for admission to the University or any other HEI;

- would not be able to lawfully enter University premises for all or part of the duration of a programme by reason of a court order;

- an applicant may also be refused admission following a risk assessment under the following policies: UCC Student Garda Vetting Policy; UCC Child Protection Policy, or UCC Fitness to Practise Policy;

- The University reserves the right to rescind an offer of admission if it found at any stage during the admissions process, including after registration, that the applicant has presented falsified documents.

Interaction with the University and the Applicant

The University is committed to ensuring that any interaction with an applicant, or any enquirer, is conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner. The University will support staff in managing situations where this is not reciprocated.

Complaints and Appeals

UCC aims to provide a high standard and quality of service for applicants. If an applicant is not satisfied with the service received, they are entitled to make a complaint. An applicant may appeal an admission decision, if they can demonstrate that the assessment of the application was based on an incorrect process or/and where the decision was based on misinterpretation of information provided as part of the application process.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governance

UCC is a constituent university of the National University of Ireland. The Senate of the National University of Ireland determines the basic matriculation requirements for the constituent universities but UCC may prescribe additional requirements either for all or specific UCC programmes[5]. Academic Council and its relevant committees oversee selection, admissions and exclusion of students[6]. Academic Council delegates this authority to relevant committees and staff.

UCC Admissions Offices

The admissions offices have overall responsibility, acting under delegated authority from Academic Council, for the admission of students to the University and for ensuring compliance with published

---

[5] The Universities Act, 1997 Section 27.
[6] The Universities Act, 1997 Section 27.

entry criteria and enrolment plans. The admissions offices are responsible for the management of offers allocation process, auditing application decisions on the basis of approved and published entry criteria and, managing the verification of the academic records of incoming students.

The admissions offices provide comprehensive, accurate and accessible information and advice to applicants and other stakeholders in the admissions process. UCC Fees Office is responsible for the assessment of fee status for an applicant which determines the application process to be followed. In some cases, a change in fee status may make the original application invalid.

1. *UCC Admissions Office*

The Admissions Office manages the admission of EU undergraduate students via the Central Applications Office (CAO) and other local application processes. Offers are made and waitlists are managed via the CAO and the procedure is set out in detail in the CAO handbook. There are three main rounds of offers: Round A, Round Zero and Round One. After the reply date for Round One offers has passed, CAO then issues Round Two offers for remaining places. Subsequent offers are issued by CAO, as necessary, to fill any vacancies that may arise. The Admissions Office supports prospective students from initial enquiry stage, through to application, registration and orientation. A dedicated support service is in place for first year students. The Admissions Office is also responsible for Student Garda Vetting.

2. *UCC International Office*

The International Office manages the admission of Non-EU undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research students. Complete applications are evaluated on a rolling basis and offers are issued on a first-come, first-served. A decision is made based on individual assessment of each application. For high demand programmes, a wait list is maintained in coordination with the academic programme. The International Office is also responsible for student mobility programmes. It supports applicants from initial enquiry stage, through to application, immigration, arrival, registration and orientation. Postgraduate research students are assessed on a rolling basis throughout the year and are admitted four times per year, in January, April, July and October.

3. *UCC Graduate Studies Office*

The Graduate Studies Office manages the admission of EU postgraduate taught and research students. It supports applicants from initial enquiry stage, through to application, and registration. Furthermore, it manages the examination and record keeping for all research students. Most postgraduate taught programmes operate on a rolling admissions basis with decisions being taken as soon as possible after receipt of completed applications. Within this process there are four rounds of offers (this means that offers are made, at a minimum, four times a year on a rolling basis), with most programmes closing for applications on 1st July. A waitlist is maintained in coordination with the academic programme director. Some postgraduate taught programmes have specific closing dates and operate outside of the rounds systems. All closing dates are published in the online prospectus. After the 1st of July late applications may be accepted prior to the commencement of Semester 1 on a first-come, first-served basis for any programmes that have remaining capacity. Research students are assessed on a rolling basis throughout the year and are admitted four times per year, in January, April, July and October.

4. *UCC Centre for Continuing Professional Development*

The Centre for CPD manages the admission of students onto CPD modules. It supports applicants from initial enquiry stage, through to application, registration and orientation.

Applicant Responsibility

The applicant is responsible for:

- Checking current entry criteria;

- Provision of full and accurate information in the application;

- Updating the application with additional information or corrections as necessary.

  *UCC reserves the right to verify information provided. If documents are found to have been falsified, the awarding body will be notified and, if an offer has issued, it will be withdrawn in line with UCC Terms & Conditions Governing Offers of Admission.

Academic Statutes and Regulations
Applicant Appeals Policy
Applicant Complaints Policy
Asylum Seekers and Refugees/ University of Sanctuary
CAO Handbook
Child Protection Policy
Deferred Entry/Deferrals policy
EU Assessments Policy
First Year Change of Course
Flexi-Options
HEAR and DARE
Medical Applicants not 'In Good Standing'
Quercus Scholarships
Recognition of Prior Learning
Student Garda Vetting

Student Fitness to Practise Policy
Student Data Protection Notice
Transfer/ Advanced Entry Policy
Withdrawals Policy (including leave of absence)
Leave of Absence for Research Students
Recognition of Prior Learning for Admission to Research Degrees
PhD by Prior Published Work

<u>Related Policies and Procedures</u>