

Admissions Policy

Institutional Aims

The principal aim of Aston University's Admissions Policy is to offer admission to and admit students who offer the greatest potential to contribute towards the Aston 2020 strategy. The Aston 2020 strategy is divided into eight strategic aims. This includes:

Aston Graduates

'Aston will continue to recruit students with high entry grades to our degree programmes. Students from all backgrounds will benefit from our ability to engage and challenge, and to develop learning experiences based on the needs of students, delivered through a variety of different modes and channels. We remain committed to widening participation and success'.

To that purpose our admissions staff will seek to recruit students who demonstrate the best talent towards successfully completing their chosen studies, in view of specific recruitment targets, without bias on grounds of age, social, racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability or religious considerations.

In support of our Widening Participation activities Aston University runs a number of Outreach programmes providing opportunities for Aston students to engage with local schools and the local community, including Student Tutoring, ACE (Active Community Engagement) Volunteering, Aimhigher Mentoring Programme and Aimhigher Summer School.

Aston University recognises the importance of scholarships, studentships and bursaries to help ensure that anyone who is qualified to study at Aston University can do so, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to admissions to all foundation, undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes.

Responsibilities, policy approval and updating

The Admissions Strategy Steering Committee (ASSC) has overall responsibility for the admissions policy, including its approval and review. ASSC is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor/Provost and the membership includes the Associate Deans, the Director of Admissions, Outreach and Recruitment, Heads of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions, and representatives from Marketing and Student Recruitment. ASSC has responsibility for overseeing the admissions process and ensuring that decision making complies with University and, in the case of undergraduate admissions, UCAS guidelines. ASSC has delegated the review of admissions procedures to the Cross University Admissions Forum (CUAF), comprising all School Admissions Managers, the Heads of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions and representatives from the International Office, Marketing and Student Recruitment. CUAF is responsible for identify training needs for admissions staff and referring any strategic decisions to the ASSC.

Aston University operates a centralised admissions process with responsibilities devolved as follows:

- Schools of Study, in conjunction with the Admissions Team, are responsible for determining selection criteria. ASSC will approve any changes to entry requirements;
- Admissions are responsible for initial decisions on applications. Applications requiring special consideration may be referred to academic Admissions Tutors;
- The Heads of Undergraduate/Postgraduate Admissions are responsible for undertaking assessments for applicants with criminal convictions;
- The Heads of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions are responsible for coordinating the implementation of procedures and policies and ensuring consistency across the admissions team;
- The Disability/Enabling Team will make recommendations to the relevant School of Study about individual support requirements.

Related regulations, policies and procedures

Aston University's admissions practices act in accordance with the following regulations, policies and procedures:

- Aston University's 2020 strategy
- Aston University's General Regulations for Academic Programmes
- Government legislation on Equal Opportunities
- Aston University's Equality and Diversity Policy
- Aston University's Policy Statement and Guidance on supporting students with a disability
- Aston University's Access and participation plans (APPs)
- Aston University's guidelines and procedures for admissions :
 - Guidelines for criminal convictions
 - Under 18s policy
 - Applicant appeals and complaints
- UCAS regulations for institutions (for undergraduate programmes)
- UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access
- Requirements of accrediting professional bodies where relevant.

Enquiries

We are committed to ensuring that all our information for applicants and enquirers is clear and provides relevant information for understanding the requirements of the University and for making informed decisions on courses. Enquirers, applicants and their families are encouraged to visit the campus in Birmingham, either at a formal open day or by arranging an informal tour. Available dates and further details are available on our website at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/opendays>.

Applications

Applications to all full-time undergraduate degree programmes and UK/EU applicants to the Foundation Programme must be made via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). International applicants to the Foundation can apply via UCAS or directly using the University's on-line application form. All other courses based at the University, including foundation degrees, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes, should be made directly to the University using the on-line application form.

Each application is considered individually but as a holistic entity, based on information submitted on the application form. Certain courses may require applicants to attend an interview.

As a minimum requirement, applicants must meet the entry qualifications set out in the Aston University General Regulations for Programmes and fulfil the standard entry requirements for the specific course, including any pre-requisite subject areas. Requirements for each course are available on the University website. The criteria and procedures for selection are followed consistently and professionally by all University staff involved in the admissions process. However, academic discretion in considering all other available information underpins the selection process to ensure individual circumstances are taken into account and that it is fair across a range of experiences and expertise.

As part of the admissions process, students enrolling onto certain programmes within the School of Life and Health Sciences and Aston Medical School at Aston University will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. All positive checks will be reviewed by the School's Disclosure and Barring Service Board and certain disclosures may result in restrictions being placed on the student during their studies or ultimately, in the withdrawal of an offer. Further details can be found at <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lhs/undergraduate/fitnessto-practice-information/>

Applications to years other than year one for undergraduate programmes

The relevant Associate Dean or their nominee may exempt from part of a programme of study individual students who have satisfactorily pursued a previous programme of study of an appropriate nature and standard. Where an offer is made to a student to enter a programme in a year other than the first year, the authorised member of staff should be sure that the student has already gained the required knowledge and skills for which exemption is awarded and that their ability to follow the rest of the programme will not be jeopardised.

Assessment of prior learning

In some cases credit may be given for previous certificated learning (APL) or experiential learning (APEL). The student will be advised by the appropriate admissions staff on the nature of the evidence that will be required to support their claim for APL or APEL. When making an offer for admission with exemption based on APL or APEL, the authorised member of staff should be sure that the student has already gained the required knowledge and skills for which exemption is awarded and that their ability to follow the rest of the programme will not be jeopardised.

Deferred entry

Deferred entry is granted on the discretion of admissions staff. Applicants should indicate that they wish to defer entry on their application form. Applications for deferred entry will be considered equally up until the point of confirmation. Normally, deferred entry is granted for one year only. Applicants who receive a conditional offer for the current application cycle but do not meet the conditions by the specified deadline may be allowed to defer their entry to the next year. If deferral is not permitted then the application will be withdrawn and the applicant may reapply in the next year.

Transferring from other Universities

Undergraduate students wishing to transfer to Aston University from another university should apply through UCAS. Consideration for entry into the second year will be dependent upon the content of and achievement in previous studies.

Care Leavers

Aston University is committed to supporting students who have been in care to ensure that help and support is there when it is needed. Care Leavers will be contacted by the dedicated contact in the Hub who will offer on-going support and guidance and can help care leavers access relevant scholarships and bursaries. Care leavers are guaranteed accommodation for 52 weeks a year and for the duration of the course.

International students

Aston University complies with UKVI regulations governing the recruitment of international students. If a Tier 4 visa is required international applicants who have accepted an offer of a place to study at Aston University will be issued with a Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS), which will confirm Aston University as the applicants 'educational' sponsor. Before a CAS is issued, international applicants will be required to complete a pre-CAS questionnaire.

To be accepted onto a programme of study international students must be able to satisfy the University's English language requirements. The level required will depend on the programme applied for. Full details can be found at: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/international-students/english-language-requirements>.

Decisions

Applicants will be informed of the University's decision on their applications as expeditiously as possible. In the case of unsuccessful applications, feedback is available on request by contacting the Admissions Team.

For taught programmes, where possible, applicants who have been unsuccessful for their initial choice will be considered for appropriate alternative courses within the University and informed of any alternative offers at the same time as being notified of the decision on their initial choice.

Any offer of a place made will include details on how to respond to the offer and further information on subsequent steps.

Acceptances

Undergraduate applicants who accept a conditional offer of a place at Aston University but subsequently fail to meet all the conditions may still be confirmed onto their initial choice if there are still vacancies available on that course and if, upon academic reconsideration of the application, it is deemed that the overall qualities and achievements of the applicant is appropriate to the spirit of the offer.

Applicants for postgraduate taught programmes who fail to meet the University's entry criteria for a specific programme will not normally be able to compensate for underachievement. Where reconsideration for the same course is not possible, an applicant will be considered for any appropriate and available alternative courses within the University. Any alternative course offer is made in the belief that it is mutually beneficial to the applicant and the University, but there will be no obligation placed upon the applicant to accept it. Aston University will release any such applicant who expresses a desire to look for an alternative course elsewhere.

Applicants who have accepted and met all the conditions of an offer will be informed of procedures and requirements for registering as students of Aston University and for accessing its facilities. The University seeks to make the transition to student membership helpful, and its induction, orientation and registration arrangements are geared towards providing the best and most informed start for its students.

Age on entry

Applicants who will be under 18 on entry should consult the University's Policy for Students under the age of 18 Years.

Undergraduate students aged 21 years or over in the year of entry are deemed 'mature students'. We welcome applications from this group of students who will be given equal consideration.

Students with Disabilities and Specific Learning Needs

We welcome applications from students with disabilities and aim to enable them to make the most of their time at university. Applications will be considered on academic merit. We recommend that students let us know in advance if they have any additional needs so that early contact with the Enabling Team can be established. For further details about additional support and counselling, please contact the Disability Team.

Religious beliefs

The University welcomes applications from students of all beliefs (and non-beliefs) and acknowledges that in the observance of their religion there may be certain holy days and religious festivals which will prevent attendance at Open Days, interviews and other activities related to application. In these cases, the University will make all reasonable efforts to provide alternative arrangements.

Document Verification

All students will be required to present original academic and personal documentation at enrolment prior to the start of the programme of study. All documentation is verified by University admissions staff. If any information relevant to the application is found to be fraudulent, inconsistent with the application or missing, the application will be deemed void and the offer of a place will be cancelled. In addition to this, for undergraduate applications, UCAS operates a strict monitoring policy and will cancel any applications found to be fraudulent or misleading. Please refer to the on-line UCAS Application guide, with particular reference to the 'Declaration' section.

Extenuating circumstances

It is the applicant's responsibility to inform the University of any extenuating circumstances that may lead, or have led to, academic performance that is not truly indicative of their true potential. Extenuating circumstances should be brought to the attention of the relevant admissions team before examination results are released.

We would expect circumstances affecting assessment to have been taken up with the relevant examination body in the first instance. However, all relevant cases will be considered as part of the decision-making process and the University reserves the right to request further information from any applicant submitting extenuating circumstances. If deemed necessary, and with the applicant's permission, the applicant's academic institution, examination body, doctor or other appropriate third party may be contacted.

Data Protection

All UCAS applications are subject to the UCAS Data Protection agreement, as described in the 'Data Protection Act' information of the UCAS Declaration section. In addition, all applications to Aston University are covered under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. The information provided in applications will only be used for admissions purposes and will form part of the student's record if they accept a place. The information will be confidential between the applicant, the University and any other parties the applicant has consented to as part of the application process (e.g. UCAS). However, Aston University may

have to release information to authorised outside agencies, such as the police or the Home Office, to prevent or detect fraud.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 you are entitled to access your personal data. You also have the right to correct your data, as set out in the Applicant Privacy notice, which can be viewed at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection/privacy-notice/documents/Applicant%20Privacy%20Notice.pdf>.

Appeals

Anyone wishing to appeal, whether formally or informally, against any aspect of the handling of their application by Aston University may do so by contacting any member of our admissions staff.

All appeals will be handled in accordance with our Applicant Appeals Procedures, which defines the grounds for appeal.