



## ADMISSIONS POLICY – September 2020

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## **Institutional Context**

This Policy relates to applications to all taught University higher education programmes on our campuses at Trefforest, Glyntaff, Cardiff and Newport.

The Policy is written and applied in accordance with and alongside other University policies in the operation of admissions including the Academic Plan and with specific reference to the University's Regulations for Taught Courses that are produced and regularly reviewed.

Underpinning the Admissions Policy is the University's Vision to be the University of choice in Wales and beyond, for students organisations and communities who value vocationally-focused education and applied research which provides solutions to problems that affect society and the economy.

Consideration has been given to relevant legislation with reference to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Quality Code advice and guidance for the theme of [Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access](#).

## **1 Admissions Principles**

USW welcomes applications from applicants who have the capacity to participate and the interest and motivation to succeed in higher education. The decision to admit a student will be taken on individual merit and demonstrated through the application process. We will take into account a wide range of formal qualifications as well as any relevant work/life experiences and each application is considered on an individual basis.

### **1.1 Basis of Selection**

The selection process starts with the consideration of a completed application. Interviews or auditions are held for some courses, including those where it is a requirement of a professional body which accredits particular courses.

The processes used in selection are underpinned by the following principles:

- The process is based on fairness and merit, seeking to minimise barriers and provide appropriate support.
- We recognise that talent and potential may not always be reflected in examination results, and we welcome applications showing alternative evidence of skills and competences which may sometimes be accepted in lieu of formal qualifications.
- We take into account the diverse range of qualifications available and welcome applications from those with non-traditional qualifications. We will request proof of qualifications and examination results during the application process.
- Students whose first language is not English or Welsh will be required to obtain a qualification acceptable to the University which indicates their ability to study through the medium of English or Welsh (where appropriate) and successfully complete their chosen course. Guidance can be obtained by referring to the University web site.

## 1.2 Minimising barriers

USW values diversity and encourages a wider student population by welcoming applications from all those interested in higher education. We welcome applications from all racial and social groups and those that have special needs or disabilities.

Course entry requirements are detailed on the University's website and also on the UCAS website for full-time undergraduate courses.

## 2 Responsibility for Admissions

### 2.1 Responsibilities

USW operates a centralised admissions procedure for the majority of its courses under which decisions are made based on set entry criteria. Each Faculty is responsible for setting its admissions criteria for each course in conjunction with University admissions staff as required. Amendments to course entry criteria is considered by the Enquiries & Admissions Team in conjunction with faculties via the University's Admissions Forum

The Enquires & Admissions Team is responsible for making decisions on applications where there is no interview, audition or review of a portfolio required. Where an interview, audition or review of a portfolio is required, the Enquiries & Admissions Team co-ordinates with academic staff such activity and communicate the outcome in a timely and professional manner to applicants. See section 5 for details.

### 2.2 Monitoring and Review

The Policy is ratified by the University's Quality Assurance (QAC) Committee while day-to-day implementation is the responsibility of the Enquiries & Admissions Team in consultation with Faculties and relevant Corporate Departments. Consultation and amendments on the Policy are led by the Head of Admissions in consultation with the Admissions Forum and presented to QAC for consideration, amendment and/or ratification. Consideration will be given to other University guidelines and associated policies. Compliance with other relevant legislation including the Human Rights Act, Equality Act 2010, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and the Welsh Language Act will be actively monitored.

Admissions processes and procedures are reviewed annually by the Enquiries & Admissions Team as part of its commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement.

The USW is committed to equal opportunities in its admissions and this is underpinned by the University's "Strategic Equality Plan" (details available on request). An Equality Impact Assessment of the Policy is undertaken periodically and is available on request.

### 2.3 Disclosure and Barring Service

Certain courses<sup>1</sup>, for example teaching, health or social work related subjects require an applicant to provide full disclosure of all offences and cautions at the point of application. These courses also necessitate an applicant to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check prior to enrolment. The process is co-ordinated by the Enquiries & Admissions Team in conjunction with relevant academic Faculties.

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants are encouraged to contact the University if they have any queries regarding which courses require a full disclosure.

## **3 Application Process**

### **3.1 Overview**

The Enquiries & Admissions Team is responsible for receiving and processing applications except those for Research Programmes which are the responsibility of the Graduate Research Office. Applicants must submit a fully completed application supported by references and confirmation of examination results prior to enrolment. Any applicant or enrolled student who fails to meet this requirement, or who submits/provides false information as part of their application process, will not be offered a place or may be withdrawn from the University regardless of the duration of the course already studied. If necessary, the Verification Team at UCAS will also be notified.

Communication to applicants up to pre-enrolment is also the responsibility of Marketing & Student Recruitment at which point Academic Registry and the Faculties become responsible for course induction. Marketing & Student Recruitment co-ordinates the communication of enrolment and accommodation information to successful applicants to enable them to progress smoothly from prospective student to enrolled student.

### **3.2 Discontinued Students**

USW students who have a status of “discontinued” are not normally allowed to reapply for a minimum of twelve months from the date they were discontinued. After this period they have the right to reapply but should be aware that their previous study will be taken into consideration along with any supporting evidence of further experience or academic study taken since leaving the University.

### **3.3 Applicants who have outstanding debt with the University**

Applicants who are in debt to the University for any reason shall not be permitted to enrol on a programme at the University. Any new applications will therefore be withdrawn at the point of application until the debt has been cleared in full or a repayment plan has been agreed and evidenced with Revenue staff.

### **3.4 Course Changes**

The University will consult with applicants, informing them of any changes in relation to locations of study, course titles, course content, additional costs, fees or course closures. When necessary, applicants will also be advised and supported in order to secure an alternative study option at USW.

### **3.5 Decisions on Applications**

The University, where all the required information has been submitted, will seek to make an admissions decision as soon as possible. Some factors may delay the process especially when further information is required from the applicant and/or an interview or audition is needed or during peak periods around UCAS deadlines. Offer emails are sent to all applicants informing them of their decision.

Offer emails detail start dates, course title and location. Additional information including fees and additional costs of study are included on individual course pages. In addition there is a link to the University Admissions Terms and Conditions embedded within the offer email. The University Admissions Terms and Conditions are reviewed annually and are published on the University website.

### **3.6 Applying for Courses**

All full-time undergraduate applications must be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), or Conservatoires UK Admissions Service (CUKAS) for music undergraduate courses at RWCMD, or for graduate teacher training through the UCAS Teacher Training. Part-time undergraduate and all postgraduate taught and research applications should be made using the University’s online application.

### 3.7 Deferred Applications

An applicant can apply to delay the start of their course by applying to defer their application or they can, in some cases apply for the following academic year. Deferred applications for study are accepted for most courses, however a small number are not able to accommodate deferred entry so all applicants should check the University course page or confirm with the Enquires & Admissions Team if deferral is possible before applying.

### 3.8 Record of Prior Learning & Transfers

Previous study, work experience and training can also count as credit towards your programme of study – this is known as ‘Recognising Prior Learning (RPL)’. If you have achieved qualifications such as a Foundation Degree or Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) or modules of an undergraduate (UG) or postgraduate (PG) degree at another university, we can consider an application for module exemption. Direct entry into the second or third year of an undergraduate programme is also possible, dependent on what has been achieved and its relevance to the programme applied for. This process is called Credit Transfer and is granted where we can directly map the modules you already have, and their content to those delivered on the programme you are applying for. Credit can only be applied against whole completed modules, partial completion cannot be considered.

### 3.9 International Admissions

Applications for admission from international students are considered in exactly the same way as Home/EU applications except where additional requirements are placed upon the institution by Government/legislative bodies. These include the requirements of UKVI.

### 3.10 Fee Assessments

Where an applicant's fee status is uncertain from the information provided within the application we may request additional information to enable us to determine the correct status and ensure the correct course fee structure.

## 4 Communications to applicants including feedback, complaints and appeals.

In the case of unsuccessful applicants, feedback, advice and guidance will be provided in consultation with academic staff as requested except for Nursing and Midwifery courses. All requests for feedback must be made in writing to the USW. No communications will be entered into with anyone other than the applicant, or without the applicant's consent.

Where an applicant has a complaint about USW's admissions process the applicant should put their complaint in writing to the Head of Admissions via [admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@southwales.ac.uk). Applicants should include their name, address date of birth and the course applied for. Complaints will normally be responded to in full within 20 working days.

USW will consider appeals made in writing with regards the outcome of a selection decision. The appeal should be made in writing to the Head of Admissions via [admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@southwales.ac.uk). Applicants should include their name, address date of birth and the course applied for. Appeals will normally be responded to in full within 20 working days. Appeals will be considered by senior staff from within E&A alongside staff from the Faculty.

## **5 Enquiry & Admissions staff**

All Enquiry & Admissions staff undertake continuous training and development ensuring they are aware of University, national, and international developments in relation to admissions to higher education. Close liaison between Enquiry & Admissions staff and those in the Faculties/departments ensures consistency and transparency of the admissions process.

## **6 Personal Data**

Applicants to USW will receive, within four weeks of submitting their application, details of how their personal data will be used in the admissions and enrolment process. This is in compliance with the 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Details are also published on the admissions section of the University website.

## **7 Welsh Language Act 2018**

Applications through the medium of Welsh are welcomed.

## **8 Progression**

Applicants who have studied for a Foundation Degree, a Higher National Diploma at a Partner Institution or another institution and wish to “top-up” to a relevant full degree at USW are able to apply to do so by completing the University’s online application.<sup>9</sup> In addition, applicants who have studied an undergraduate degree at USW or at another HE institution and wish to apply for a postgraduate course can do so by completing the University online application.

## **9 Student Charter**

This policy has been developed with consideration for the principles and edicts of the University of South Wales’s [Student Charter](#) which is accessible to all applicants and students.

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