

THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES: UNDERGRADUATE

The University has always sought to approach the issue of admission of applicants with special needs and disabilities in an equitable and positive way, but in any case the very recent extension of the disability discrimination legislation now makes it very difficult for Universities to legally deny admission on the basis of disability. There will still remain certain individual cases where admission of particular applicants (either in general, or to particular programmes) would be irresponsible, but generally the onus is on the HE provider to resolve practical and pedagogic obstacles to study for applicants with special needs or disabilities.

Therefore the general emphasis of the University's procedures are:

- Initially to consider each applicant purely on academic grounds;
- If there is an academic case for making an offer, then to consider the applicant's specific needs and to ascertain whether the University can meet those needs, and whether we can justify not admitting the applicant solely on the basis of their disability.

In the great majority of cases the University will already have the capacity to deal with the special need, or it will be possible to rectify this shortfall, therefore allowing the offer to be made (even if additional information has to be sought afterwards). In many of the cases, the application can be fast-tracked (see 12.4 below). In some cases, however, there will be genuine doubt (often involving inadequate information) and the purpose of our special needs procedure *prior* to offer-making is to provide clarification, expeditiously, in these limited numbers of cases.

Definition:

On the UCAS form, applicants are asked to declare any special need or disability in a box in section 2 and then to provide additional information in section 8. Selectors may also find reference to special needs or disability in the Personal Statement or Reference, which may not have been declared in Section 2. In these cases, the Selector may feel that (s)he wishes to flag the applicant in the special needs procedure or to discuss the case with the Student Support Unit (see 12.10 for contact details).

Applicants are required to indicate any special need/disability on the front of the UCAS form in Section 2 using one of the following codes:

0	No Special Need or Disability
1	Learning Difficulty (e.g. Dyslexia)
2	Blind/Partially Sighted
3	Deaf/Hard of Hearing
4	Wheelchair User/Mobility Difficulties
T	Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger Syndrome
6	Mental Health Difficulties
7	Unseen Disability, e.g. Diabetes, Epilepsy, Asthma
8	Two or More of the Above Disabilities/Special Needs
9	Disability Not Listed

If 0 is declared (or if the box is left blank and there is nothing anywhere on the form to suggest otherwise) then the applicant is assumed to have no special needs or disability.

Initial Undergraduate Office Checks:

Upon receipt of the UCAS form, the Undergraduate Office (Admissions) will highlight on the UCAS form any cases of applicants declaring a special need. The Office will not, however, check section 8 of the form, nor does the Office read the entire form, so is not able to pick up any reference to special needs which might be mentioned in the Personal Statement or Reference.

Consequently, responsibility for checking for any special need or disability rests with the Subject Selector or Admissions Tutor reviewing the entire application.

Fast Track Procedures:

There are a number of Special Needs and Disabilities that will not cause a problem for the University and which do not require any special facilities. In these cases, offers can be made without recourse to the full special needs procedures (as outlined in 12.5 below). In these cases the Student Support Unit (SSU) will simply follow up offers with further information about the Unit and the support they can provide *after* the offer has been sent to the applicant.

The main categories which can in most cases be excluded from the Special Needs procedures and fast-tracked are as follows:

Code 1 – Dyslexia – The University should be able to support applicants with specific learning difficulties including ADHD, Dysgraphia, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dystonia. All cases of applicants declaring category 1 can be fast-tracked.

Code 6 – Mental Health Difficulties – The Student Support Unit advise that these candidates should be made the offer and SSU will follow up the application afterwards. All Category 6 applications can be fast-tracked.

Code 7 – Unseen Disability – This category covers a large range of possible special needs and disabilities. The list 12.11 is the range of special needs/disabilities which come under code 7 but which the SSU currently advise can automatically be fast-tracked. Where an applicant declares a condition not listed, the Admissions Selector may wish to contact the SSU direct for guidance as to whether the condition means that the application should be placed in the Special Needs procedure or whether it can be fast-tracked. SSU can be telephoned on extension 7466 or emailed on studentsupport@admin.susx.ac.uk. In cases of applicants declaring code 7, Selectors will need to check box 8 on the UCAS form for further information and where one of the conditions contained in the attached list is recorded the application can be fast-tracked. In all other cases, the application should be placed in the Special Needs procedures (see 12.5)

In all these fast-track cases, the Selector should simply consider the form in the normal way and indicate what, if any, offer (s)he wishes to make. When the form is returned to the Office and the decision has been processed, a photocopy of the UCAS form will be sent to the SSU for follow-up information, which they will send direct to the applicant.

If an applicant declares categories 2, 3, 4 or 5 then the application **must** be placed in the Special Needs procedure *before* an offer is made (see 12.5 below). In the cases of category 8 (*Two or more disabilities*) or category 9 (*Condition not listed*), then the application can only be fast-tracked if the conditions declared fall into the fast-tracked categories explained above.

Special Needs Procedures:

If a Selector identifies an applicant with a Special Need which cannot be fast-tracked then (s)he should attach a 'Special Needs' sticker to the front of the UCAS form (copies of this blue sticker are enclosed in the wallet at the back of this folder). The Selector should then indicate her/his preliminary assessment decision based solely on the applicant's academic record and return the form to the Undergraduate Office (Admissions).

As the offer will **not** be processed until the Special Need has been considered, the Admissions Selector may choose to send the applicant the standard 'holding' letter which explains that the application is still being considered, but that the Selector has noticed the declared special need and has passed the form to the Student Support Unit for further consideration (see 12.7 below). The text for this standard holding letter is shown in 12.8 and is also available in an electronic form from the Assistant Registrar (Undergraduate Admissions). This text should not normally be varied.

The Admissions Selector must not, however, enter into any other correspondence with the applicant until *after* the Special Need has been considered (see 12.7).

Please note: If the Selector has identified a possible Special Needs applicant from comments made either by the applicant in the Personal Statement or by the referee in the Reference, but the applicant has not actually declared a disability in either section 2 or section 8, then these should be treated carefully. In these cases the blue 'Special Needs' sticker should be added and the form put through the Special Needs procedure described here, but a copy of the 'holding' letter should **not** be sent.

For applicants recommended an offer, the UCAS form will be copied by the relevant Admissions Clerk and sent to the SSU for consideration. The Disability Co-ordinator will review the application and make a decision as to whether the applicant's disability requires further investigation or whether the offer should proceed immediately. If the SSU immediately recommend that there are no particular special needs then the offer will be processed without further consideration.

However, if further investigation is required, the Disability Co-ordinator will contact the applicant. If it is necessary to arrange an interview, this will be organised by the Disability Co-ordinator (in consultation with the Admissions Office or relevant Science School).

If upon investigation it is felt that there are no special facilities required and the University can cope with the applicant's particular needs, then the Disability Co-ordinator will indicate that the offer can proceed and return the Special Needs form. **As above, this will not require further approval.**

In more complex cases, requiring the applicant to visit the University, the Student Support Unit will write to the applicant to make explicit that a visit needs to take place prior to any final decision being processed. The SSU will arrange this visit (ideally to coincide with an Admissions Day) and SSU will organise for a small team of relevant officers (including a member of SSU, the relevant Sub-Dean and/or Selector, and representatives from other appropriate areas, such as the Library, Housing, Examinations) to meet with the applicant to ensure that the University can meet his/her needs. After the meeting, SSU are responsible for ensuring that all those present (including the Subject Group representative) reach a final decision and if everyone agrees that any needs can be met, the SSU will then notify the Undergraduate Office (Admissions) that the offer can proceed.

Only in cases where there is disagreement (for example, where a subject representative does not feel able to commit her/his Subject Group to admitting the student), or where the SSU are recommending that an offer cannot proceed, does the application need to go to the relevant Dean (or the Dean's nominee) for a final decision. In these cases the SSU will pass the case to the Dean, along with a report on the particular circumstances, and will gain a final decision from the Dean on whether to proceed with the offer. This final

decision will then be passed back to the Undergraduate Office (Admissions) for processing.

Lack of Information:

In cases where an applicant does not provide further information in Box 8 about a declared special need/disability, then the application will need to be placed in the Special Needs procedure and the SSU will follow up with the applicant as they feel appropriate.

If an applicant fails to respond to requests for further information from the SSU about a declared Special Need/disability, and also fails to respond to chase letters/emails, then the SSU will pass the application back to the Admissions Officer. The Admissions Office will then write to the applicant on the assumption that the failure to respond to letters indicates the applicant is no longer interested in the University. The applicant will be told that the University will withdraw his/her application if they do not respond and will be given a deadline for doing so. If this still fails to elicit a reply the application will be withdrawn under the UCAS procedure for 'withdrawal upon failure to reply to letter'.

Correspondence with the applicant:

Subject Selectors and Admissions Tutors should not enter into correspondence with applicants being placed in the Special Needs procedure, with the exception of sending the 'holding' letter described in 12.5 above and included as 12.8.

Only once the application has received full consideration and the decision to offer a place has been taken, should the Subject Group enter into further correspondence with the applicant. Once it has been agreed that an offer can be made, the Undergraduate Office (Admissions) will notify the relevant Selector (by providing a copy of the Special Needs form) in order for the usual correspondence to be sent out.

Holding Letter:

If Admissions Tutors and Subject Selectors wish to write to applicants being placed in the full special needs procedures (as described in 12.5) then they should use the following text:

Dear [name of applicant],

Thank you for your application to study at the University of Sussex. We are pleased that you decided to apply to Sussex and we hope to reach a decision on your application shortly.

I note in Section 2 of the UCAS form that you have declared a Special Need or Disability. I have therefore arranged for a copy of your form to be sent to our Student Support Unit so that they can assess your needs, get in touch with you to discuss any particular requirements you might have and tell you about the support facilities we have available here at Sussex.

In the meantime, your application is receiving careful consideration and we should be in touch soon with a final decision. If you have any questions about the University, please do not hesitate to get in touch. [\[Selectors may wish to add their contact details here\]](#)

Thank you again for your interest in Sussex.

Yours sincerely

[Name of Admissions Tutor]

Admissions Tutors and Subject Selectors are asked not to vary from this text.

Offer Levels:

In all cases of applications from students with Special Needs/Disability, Selectors are invited to consider whether an applicant's special need or disability could impact on their ability to meet the conditions of the University's standard offers and may wish to consider reducing or amending the conditions of that offer accordingly.

Student Support Unit Contacts:

The main contact details for the SSU are as follows:

 (01273) (87)7466

E-mail: studentsupport@admin.susx.ac.uk

If Selectors have specific questions, these can be addressed to the Disability Co-Ordinators Jacqui Painter and/or Terri Stone.

12.11 Category 7 – Unseen Disability: Conditions which can be fast-tracked

The Student Services Division have advised that applicants declaring **code 7** and naming one (or more) of the following conditions in box 8 need not be referred to the Student Support Unit prior to offer.

The fast-track conditions are:

Adrenal Hyperplasia
Allergies

Asthma
Back problems (refer if reference to mobility)
Bladder problems
Bronchitis
Cancer (refer if current)
Cerebral Palsy mild (refer if not described as mild)
Coeliac Disease
Colour Blindness
Crohns Disease
Cystic Fibrosis
Dermatological problems
Diabetes
Duodenal Ulcer
Deep Vein Thrombosis (if mobility affected refer to SSU)
Dystonic hand cramp
Epilepsy
Eczema
Endometriosis
Esophagitis
Fracture / Dislocation (refer of reference to mobility)
G6PD deficiency
Gastritis
Gender reassignment
Glandular Fever (refer if current)
Haemophilia
Hay Fever
High Blood Pressure
HIV positive
Hyperhidrosis
Hypertension
Hysterectomy
Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
Lyme Disease
Malaria
Migraines / headaches
Mononucleosis
Nephrotic Syndrome
Pneumonia
Polio (refer if reference to mobility)
Psoriasis
Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)
Rhinitis
Shingles
Shoulder Injury
Sickle Cell Anaemia
Stammer
Tendonitis
Thalassanaemia
Thyroid Conditions
Ulcerative Colitus

Wrist / Hand damage

Where an applicant refers to a condition not on the above list it is suggested that the Admissions Tutor or Subject Selector phone the SSU and ask for guidance, rather than automatically refer the application through the full procedures, as this will allow for a swifter response:

☎ (01273) (87)7466 or e-mail studentsupport@admin.susx.ac.uk

Details of applicants declaring any of the conditions in the above list will be forwarded to the Student Support Unit following any offer so that any requirements can be discussed with the applicant.

SPECIAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES FORM

NAME OF APPLICANT:

UCAS NUMBER:.....

THIS IS A DUPLICATE APPLICATION Yes

ADMISSIONS CLERK: EXT:.....

A. FORM TO BE HELD

(Please return bottom copy to Undergraduate Admissions if completing this box.)

Further information is needed to process this case - so form is being held.

Initials:

Date:

Comments:

B. FINAL DECISION

(Please return top two copies to Undergraduate Admissions once this box is complete.)

NOTE: For Duplicate Applications, unless otherwise stated, the decision relates to all applications.

one

Please ✓

(i) There is no special need/disability which prevents an offer being made.

- (ii) This application should be referred to the Dean of the School for approval. (If this option is ticked, a full report must be attached for the Dean to make a decision.)
- (iii) No reply to requests for information - returned to registry (attach copies of your correspondence with the applicant).

Comments:

Signed:.....

Date:

DEAN'S APPROVAL (only to be completed if B(ii) ticked)

(Questions relating to the Special Needs on this form should be directed to the Disability Co-ordinator, Tel: 877466.)

one

Please ✓

I agree that the offer should be made.

I do not want the offer to be made (this means a reject decision will be sent to applicant via UCAS).

Dean's Signature:

Date:

- Top Copy – Final Decision – notification for Undergraduate Office
- Second Copy – Final Decision – notification for School
- Third Copy – Disability Co-ordinator
- Bottom Copy – Hold Notification for Undergraduate Office