



University of Sussex

**Guide to  
Undergraduate Admissions  
(UCAS Applicants)**

**2012 Entry**



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	<u>Contact Details for Admissions</u>	4
1	<u>Policy, Strategy and Structure</u>	7
2	<u>Admissions Tutors and their Duties</u>	10
3	<u>Processing Applications</u>	13
4	<u>International Applications</u>	29
5	<u>Widening Participation</u>	33
6	<u>Mature Students</u>	40
7	<u>Progression Accords</u>	43
8	<u>Criminal Convictions</u>	45
9	<u>Disability and Special Needs</u>	46
10	<u>Advanced Standing and Readmission</u>	47
11	<u>Other Matters</u>	50

Appendices		PAGE
Appendix 1	Policy on feedback to unsuccessful applicants, complaints and appeals	53
Appendix 2	UKBA & English language requirements	56

## CONTACT DETAILS FOR ADMISSIONS

**The main address and contact details for the Undergraduate Admissions section are:**

Admissions Office (Undergraduate)  
Sussex House  
University of Sussex  
Brighton  
BN1 9RH  
UK

☎ +44 (0) 1273 678416

✉ ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk

Fax +44 (0) 1273 678545

### **Undergraduate Admissions Staff:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Ext.</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Head of the Admissions Office	Rob Evans	☎ 7057	R.Evans@sussex.ac.uk
Undergraduate Admissions Officer <sup>1</sup>	Louise Guy	☎ 3730	L.M.Guy@sussex.ac.uk
International Admissions Officer	Amy Clark	☎ 8874	Amy.Clark@sussex.ac.uk
Senior Admissions Co-ordinators	Janet Wilson	☎ 3728	H.J.Wilson@sussex.ac.uk
	James Horne	☎ 3807	J.Horne@sussex.ac.uk
	Ann-Marie O'Neill	☎ 2181	Anne-Marie.O-Neill@sussex.ac.uk
Admissions Co-ordinators	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239	J.Fairhall@sussex.ac.uk
	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183	R.A.Yelf@sussex.ac.uk
	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872	A.B.Rowley@sussex.ac.uk
	Ellie Bennett	☎ 3362	E.J.Bennett@sussex.ac.uk
	Chris Duffy	☎ 3463	C.Duffy@sussex.ac.uk
Admissions Assistant	Kate Addison	☎ 3725	Kate.Addison@sussex.ac.uk
Admissions Secretary	Liz Turner	☎ 3402	E.A.Turner@sussex.ac.uk

---

<sup>1</sup> The Postgraduate Admissions Officer is Philip Baker (☎ 7058; ✉ P.A.Baker@sussex.ac.uk).

## Admissions Processing:

For 2012 entry, the processing of the applications to each subject area will be handled by the following Admissions Co-ordinators working closely with the named academic Admissions Tutors:

	Admissions Tutor	Admissions Co-ordinator	Phone No.
<b>BMEc</b>			
Business & Management	Josh Siepel	Ellie Bennett	☎ 3362
Economics	Sonja Fagernas	Ellie Bennett	☎ 3362
<b>EngInfo</b>			
Engineering	Ahmet Aydin	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872
Informatics	Dan Chalmers	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872
<b>English</b>			
Drama	Bill McEvoy/Jason Price	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872
English	Mat Dimmock	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183
English Language	Christian Uffmann	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183
<b>ESW</b>			
Social Work	Russell Whiting	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Working with Young People	Vanessa Regan	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
<b>Global Studies</b>			
Anthropology	Buzz Harrison	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872
Geography	David Ockwell	Chris Duffy	☎ 3463
International Development	Buzz Harrison	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872
IR	Kevin Gray	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872
<b>HAHP</b>			
American Studies	Daniel Kane	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872
Art History	David Mellor (with Ben Burbridge)	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239
History	Claudia Siebrecht	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239
Philosophy	Murali Ramachandran	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239
<b>Life Sciences</b>			
Biochemistry	Darren Thompson	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239
Biology	Adam Eyre-Walker	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239
Chemistry	Hazel Cox	Ellie Bennett	☎ 3362
<b>LPS</b>			
Law	Helena Howe, Tarik Kochi & Kenneth Veitch	Chris Duffy	☎ 3463
Politics	Tim Bale	Chris Duffy	☎ 3463
Sociology	Ben Fincham	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239
<b>MFM</b>			
Film Studies	Dolores Tierney	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183
Media Practice	Adrian Goycoolea	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183
Other Media	Sharif Mowlabocus	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183
Music	Martin Butler & Nic McKay	Alex Rowley	☎ 3872

**MPS**

Mathematics	Vanessa Styles	Chris Duffy	☎ 3463
Physics	Simon Peeters	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183

**Psychology**

Graham Hole	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183
-------------	---------------	--------

**SLI**

Ben O'Donohoe	Rosemary Yelf	☎ 2183
---------------	---------------	--------

**Other areas of responsibility:**

In terms of other activity within admissions, the following is a list of some other areas of responsibility:

Access to HE diploma	Rob Evans	☎ 7057
Admissions day organisation	Daniella Salvage (SRS)	☎ 4249
Admissions day bookings	Kate Addison	☎ 3725
Appeals (see Appendix 1)	Rob Evans	☎ 7057
Change course requests	Admissions Co-ordinator for gaining subject	☎ see above
Complaints (see Appendix 1)	Rob Evans	☎ 7057
Confirmation & Clearing arrangements	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Deferral requests	Relevant Admissions Co-ordinator	☎ see above
Discontinued courses	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Feedback to unsuccessful applicants	Relevant Admissions Co-ordinator	☎ see above
Fee status advice	Janet Wilson or James Horne	☎ 3728 or 3807
Undergraduate Admissions Meeting	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Internal transfers back to 1 <sup>st</sup> year	Student Progress & Assessment Office	☎ 8851
International Foundation Year (at ISC)	Amy Clark	☎ 8874
International Diploma (at ISC)	Amy Clark	☎ 8874
MAS admissions system advice	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Medical School redirects	Jane Fairhall	☎ 4239
Offer levels/entry requirements	Rob Evans	☎ 7057
Open days (pre-applicant)	David Winstanley (SRS)	☎ 8263
Procedures	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Progress Reports	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Qualifications advice	Janet Wilson or James Horne	☎ 3728 or 3807
Reject checking	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Re-admissions to the university	Student Progress & Assessment Office	☎ 8851
Statistical information	Louise Guy	☎ 3730
Student recruitment	David Winstanley (SRS)	☎ 8263
Targets or quotas	Rob Evans	☎ 7057
Weblink advice	Relevant Admissions Co-ordinator	☎ see above

# CHAPTER 1: POLICY, STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE

## GENERAL

- 1.1 General policy and strategy on Undergraduate Admissions is set by the Vice Chancellor's Executive Group under the oversight of Council. Policies and strategies are developed on an ongoing basis by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), working closely with professional services and the academic Schools. The University's strategic recruitment-related aims are expressed as a set of quantified objectives which are approved by Council and are published from time to time via the University's Corporate Plan. Admissions policy is also informed by the Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee (SRAC), attended by Heads of School and chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning).

## POLICY

- 1.2 In a way that over-arches the detailed policies that the University adopts in pursuit of its strategic recruitment aims, Sussex aims to be a diverse, multi-cultural undergraduate student community that is open and welcoming to those who have the potential to pursue our programmes successfully. Sussex has a long tradition of welcoming applicants with varied qualifications and backgrounds. We work towards this by:
- providing educational opportunities for all types of student satisfying the criteria of the policy, irrespective of their previous educational attainment, and reviewing each application individually on its merits;
  - attempting to recruit a diverse community of undergraduates having regard to gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic background and disability;
  - providing specific progression routes for identified groups, including mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds in the locality and region.
- 1.3 The University is committed to:
- equality of opportunity as set out in our Equality and Diversity Policy<sup>2</sup>. The University aims to treat all applications fairly, equally, courteously and promptly;
  - giving applicants (who have applied by the UCAS deadline of 15 January and who have been offered places) the opportunity to take part in a structured visit to the campus;
  - taking properly into account all relevant factors bearing on the applicant's previous and likely attainment; and
  - offering information and special assistance to applicants who need it, particularly those with a disability or those from overseas.

## FURTHERANCE OF STRATEGIES

- 1.4 The University's strategic objectives are informed by scanning recruitment-related market intelligence, which aims to inform the planning cycle and thereby continually redevelop our undergraduate offerings.
- 1.5 The University seeks to present itself, its constituent units and their offerings, through a variety of promotional media and always with a high level of professionalism. In turn, the way in which the constituent units of the University present themselves and their offerings must be consistent with relevant University policies and standards.

---

<sup>2</sup> See [www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/policies](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/policies)

- 1.6 The University's Student Recruitment Services (SRS), assisted by academic colleagues and student ambassadors, works towards:
- increasing the number of applicants to Sussex & their proportion among all UCAS applicants;
  - improving awareness of higher education in general, and particularly that offered at Sussex;
  - facilitating progression from previous educational establishments to Sussex.
- 1.7 The University has a specific team responsible for Widening Participation, which includes the Sussex Education Access Scheme (SEAS).
- 1.8 The University's SRS division are also responsible for the recruitment of overseas students, including undergraduates, building on the long standing work formerly located in the International and Study Abroad Office (ISAO). Strategies in this area include: regional/country targeting and direct promotional work; targeted advertising; use of in-country agents; overseas-oriented scholarships; and developing new overseas-oriented academic offerings in conjunction with academic units. Contact SRS for current details of specifics of our overseas recruitment strategy.
- 1.9 The University is a member of the Open College Network South East Region (OCNSER), and attends the regional Access Practitioners' Group to keep abreast of developments within access. The University recognises all Access to HE diplomas which have been approved by one of the national Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) and regards them as satisfying the University's general entrance requirement (see Chapter 6).
- 1.10 The University is a founder member of the Sussex Liaison and Progression Accord (SLPA), which aims to facilitate the progression of local applicants to their local universities, and the Sussex Channel Islands Progression Accord (SCIPA). The Accords are premised on the basis of a tripartite agreement between the applicant, the University and the School/College with responsibilities on all parties (see Chapter 7 and <http://www.progressionaccord.org.uk/>).
- 1.11 The University's Sussex Education Access Scheme (SEAS) exists to further the University's widening participation aims. SEAS builds on the University's long-standing aims to widen access which began with the Sussex and Inner London (SAIL) scheme several decades ago. SAIL (along with the national Target Achievement Programme – TAP) was for many years the University's model for recruitment of non-traditional students. SEAS expanded the reach of SAIL to other age groups (working with students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13) and to other geographical areas (across the South East). Close attention is also paid to the widening participation needs of local schools and colleges building on the work started under Aimhigher Sussex.
- 1.12 The University welcomes those groups of disabled students whose special needs it can support and the University's Student Support Unit advises on all cases of applicants declaring a special need or disability (see Chapter 9).

## OVERSIGHT STRUCTURE

- 1.13 As noted in 1.1, University policy on undergraduate admissions is set by the VCEG in line with Council and is developed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning). Three main forums exist for the discussion and monitoring of matters relating to undergraduate admissions:
- Undergraduate Admissions Meetings;
  - Advisory Groups for the PVC (Teaching & Learning); and
  - Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee (SRAC).
- 1.14 The **Undergraduate Admissions Meeting** is held termly and provides an opportunity for Admissions Tutors to discuss procedural and policy matters and to provide advice to the PVC, Academic Registrar and Head of Admissions. In particular, the Undergraduate Admissions Meetings aim:



- to suggest means of resolving practical problems arising during the admissions process;
  - to discuss and propose policy changes to SRAC;
  - to review and comment on admissions data (specifically the Progress Reports);
  - to consider arrangements for the Confirmation, Clearing and Adjustment process; and
  - to discuss best practice in the provision of Admissions Days for applicants.
- 1.15 In addition to the Undergraduate Admissions Meetings, the PVC (Teaching & Learning) may also convene **Advisory Groups** to assist with specific issues relating to admissions and recruitment. The composition of these groups will vary depending on the matters arising, but the groups would provide guidance to the PVC (and Senior Management) on a range of issues including:
- the 'market positioning' of offer levels, as opposed to entrance requirements, which need to be agreed on an annual basis for inclusion in the Undergraduate Prospectus. Whilst Departments will need to approve subject specific entrance requirements, the level of the 'standard offer' and the terminology used to define that offer within publications are approved by the PVC;
  - the direction of admissions strategy in terms of the characteristics of entry cohorts, in the light of the University's mission statement, strategic objectives and external factors, and including standards required at confirmation and clearing;
  - marketing/advertising and in-person 'sales' strategies, including monitoring and advising on the effectiveness of Admissions Days and other recruitment and admissions events; and
  - setting and monitoring service-levels in the admissions process.
- 1.16 The **Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee** (SRAC) is chaired by the PVC (Teaching & Learning) and is attended by Heads of School and members of professional services, including the Academic Registrar, Director of Recruitment, Head of Admissions and Senior Planning Officer. The Committee meets termly to discuss University strategy and policy in relation to admissions and recruitment, including responding to national changes, reviewing planning numbers and recruitment data, reviewing offer levels, and considering English language requirements. SRAC discussions may be informed by those taken at Undergraduate Admissions Meetings, but the focus of the Admissions Tutor group is primarily about operational matters; whereas SRAC's focus is strategic.
- 1.17 The quality assurance aspects of undergraduate admissions and the monitoring of the process in terms of quality control are remitted to the Teaching and Learning Committee. TLC, for example, would be responsible for:
- quality-control of admissions processing and selection;
  - admissions policy in terms of *minimum* entry requirements (general and subject-specific);
  - policy on APEL, advanced standing and re-admission;
  - recognition of overseas qualifications; and
  - evaluating students' progress and outcomes against entry characteristics.

## CHAPTER 2: ADMISSIONS TUTORS AND THEIR DUTIES

### HEADS OF SCHOOL, HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND DIRECTORS OF TEACHING & LEARNING

- 2.1 Each Head of Department appoints an Admissions Tutor with overall responsibility for Undergraduate Admissions for that Department or subject. For a small number of departments there may be more than one Admissions Tutor, but it is anticipated in most areas that a single Admissions Tutor will represent the subject.
- 2.2 The Admissions Tutors are responsible for meeting with the Admissions Office to establish (and then keep under review) a centralised departmental admissions template for use by the Admissions Co-ordinators to process applications (and decisions) for the admissions cycle. The Head of Department is also invited to this meeting (which will normally take place in September or early October). During the admissions cycle, the Admissions Tutors will then need to consider and decide upon any applications that are not immediately covered (in terms of offers/rejections) by the departmental admissions template.
- 2.3 Admissions Tutors must be members of University faculty and should ideally have considerable experience of admissions work. The Admissions Tutor should normally be appointed for a minimum period of 3 years.
- 2.4 The names of all Admissions Tutors should be reported to the Admissions Office before the start of the Admissions Cycle in September in order to ensure adequate induction is arranged for those involved in undergraduate selection. A training schedule will be organised by the Admissions Office to include sessions on admissions procedures, qualifications, special needs/disabilities and widening participation. The undergraduate admissions meetings will then be used during the admissions cycle to update Admissions Tutors and advise on new developments.
- 2.5 Pages 4 to 5 above set out the names of the Admissions Tutors for the current cycle.
- 2.6 Admissions Tutors and Heads of Department, together with the Heads of School and Directors of Teaching & Learning, will receive from the Admissions Office regular Progress Reports on admissions figures during the admissions cycle. Admissions Office staff are happy to meet with individual Heads of School and Admissions Tutors to discuss these reports if required.
- 2.7 Heads of School, together with the Head of Admissions, determine the normal levels of conditional offers (for the annual approval by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for Admissions). These standard offer levels are normally set during the autumn term for inclusion in the Undergraduate Prospectus and will be discussed initially at the template meeting mentioned in 2.2.
- 2.8 Consistent with approved School Plans and the University's marketing strategies, the Head of School keeps School marketing under review, including the array of programmes being offered.

### ADMISSIONS TUTORS

- 2.9 The Admissions Tutor is generally responsible to the Department for co-ordinating the admissions process, for being the custodian of its selection approach, and for thinking of ways of improving recruitment. She/he may be called-upon to edit and update the Department's written articulation of its selection criteria. She/he will be responsible for agreeing and approving the departmental admissions template at the start of the UCAS cycle *before* processing can commence (see 2.12).
- 2.10 The Admissions Tutor is responsible for working with the Admissions Office to ensure that all UCAS applications to the Department are dealt with swiftly, efficiently, fairly and in line with University policy and procedure as set out in the Guide to Undergraduate Admissions (and the departmental admissions template). The Admissions Office will provide advice and monitoring statistics to assist the Admissions Tutor in this process.
- 2.11 All Admissions Tutors *must* attend any induction sessions set up at the start of the admissions cycle, as well as other briefing sessions held during the year.

- 2.12 As noted in 2.2, Admissions Tutors will meet with the Admissions Office at the start of each Admissions cycle to establish their departmental admissions template in order that the Admissions Office can process the majority of applications and set appropriate conditions for those applicants who meet the requirements for an offer. The Admissions Tutor will, however, be responsible for reviewing and making decisions on those applicants identified by the template as outside an automatic offer/reject. The Admissions Tutor(s) will have a copy of the agreed template for reference.
- 2.13 The Admissions Tutor is responsible for agreeing the wording for the departmental offer letter with the Admissions Office and for providing copies of any enclosures the department wishes to be sent out with the offer letter. The Admissions Tutor will also need to check and update the departmental set essay (where used) for the unqualified admissions scheme (see 6.2-6.7).
- 2.14 The Admissions Tutor should represent her/his Department at University Admissions Days (or ensure, with the relevant Head of Department, that there is representation by a suitably qualified colleague). The Admissions Tutor may contribute to the design and organisation of Admissions Days and will assist Student Recruitment Services (SRS) to ensure that the events run effectively. (Advice on good practice is available from the Admissions Office and SRS – see Chapter 11). Under the University's published admissions policy, SRS are responsible for offering sufficient Admissions Days to allow the attendance of all applicants receiving an offer from the University who applied prior to the UCAS deadline on 15<sup>th</sup> January.
- 2.15 The Admissions Tutor is responsible for maintaining effective communication with the Admissions Office throughout the cycle. S/he will receive Progress Reports and other relevant statistical information and is expected to attend the termly undergraduate admissions meetings. In this way, Admissions Tutors participate in the development of admissions policy.
- 2.16 The Admissions Tutor needs to be contactable during August and September, to review applicants at Confirmation who miss the conditions of their offer and/or to deal with Clearing or Adjustment applications. The situation with regard to Confirmation and Clearing will be advised each year. If the presence of an Admissions Tutor is required but s/he is not available to cover during this period, s/he is responsible for ensuring that a suitable alternate will take on this role, that that person has sufficient training, and for notifying the Undergraduate Admissions Officer of the name of the person providing cover (see also Chapter 11).

## **THE ADMISSIONS OFFICE**

- 2.17 On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, through the Registrar & Secretary, the Admissions Office will be responsible for the following functions among others:
- as far as practicable, to achieve the intake targets set by the University;
  - to assist Student Recruitment Services in co-ordinating and conducting activities designed to increase the number of motivated applicants to Sussex, from the UK and other countries;
  - to receive and process applications in accordance with the departmental admissions templates and University policy, making offers (at the appropriate level) where the templates indicate a positive outcome;
  - to set the conditions of any offers in line with the agreed departmental admissions template and University policy, to check these offers and to dispatch them to UCAS in a timely manner and in suitable numbers to yield the planned intake targets;
  - to distribute applications to the Admissions Tutors for a decision where the template indicates that the Admissions Tutor needs to consider the application;
  - to advise Admissions Tutors on the validity and use of qualifications offered by applicants as required;

- to obtain further information on applicants as required, organise interviews where requested by the Admissions Tutor, conduct second assessment of applications where appropriate and to double-check all reject decisions;
- to ensure that applicants who have received offers are invited to visit the University (normally on an Admissions Day) and to send informal offer letters to applicants receiving offers;
- to monitor the number of offers made and, in conjunction with advice from colleagues in Planning and PVC (Teaching and Learning), advise departments when to stop making offers;
- to provide Heads of School, Admissions Tutors, Heads of Department, and Directors of Teaching and Learning with statistical information about the progress of applicants, during the application process and thereafter;
- to deal with admissions correspondence from applicants (including requests for feedback from unsuccessful applicants);
- to confirm all offers where the conditions are met by the applicant;
- unless otherwise determined, to confirm other offers up to the number of vacancies available;
- as appropriate, to organise the advertising and recruiting of applicants through the Clearing and Adjustment processes;
- to assist international applicants who require a visa with the arrangements for obtaining their Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and, as required, ATAS clearance (see Chapter 4);
- in association with Schools, Departments and other University offices, to provide helpful and welcoming information to those holding offers in the form of communications in the Spring (containing information on housing and support arrangements), a mailing to all those holding offers in July (about the preparations for the summer), and to assist with the Registration process as required in September;
- to ensure throughout the process that the rules of UCAS are fully respected; and
- to keep under review and to advise the University on external developments likely to affect the recruitment of undergraduates or their study at the University.

## **EMAIL GROUPS**

- 2.18 The following email address exists for communication with Admissions Tutors and other colleagues with involvement in admissions (including the PVC Teaching and Learning, Academic Registrar, Head of Admissions, Undergraduate Admissions Officer and colleagues in SRS): **adtuts@admin.sussex.ac.uk**

## CHAPTER 3: PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

### UCAS

- 3.1 At Sussex, all applications for full-time undergraduate study are processed via the **Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)**. The University does **not** accept direct applicants for full-time undergraduate degrees. UCAS processes the applications and sends daily electronic files on Sussex applications direct to the Admissions Office. This data is held on the Marketing & Admissions System (MAS) and the Office sends daily updates on decisions and amendments back to UCAS. Paper copy application forms are currently still received from UCAS (although this will end for 2014 entry) and, currently, it is from these copy forms that decisions are reached. Access to admissions data is also available to Admissions Tutors via UCAS' own Weblink service (which allows HEIs to look at individual applications on-line) and data can also be pulled from the (view-only) UG applicant screens on the University's central CMS system. The paper copy application forms are processed by Admissions Co-ordinators in accordance with the departmental admissions template. Where necessary UCAS forms will be referred to the Admissions Tutor for a decision, but in many cases the decision can be reached using the relevant template (and without further reference to the Admissions Tutor).

### APPLICATION DEADLINES

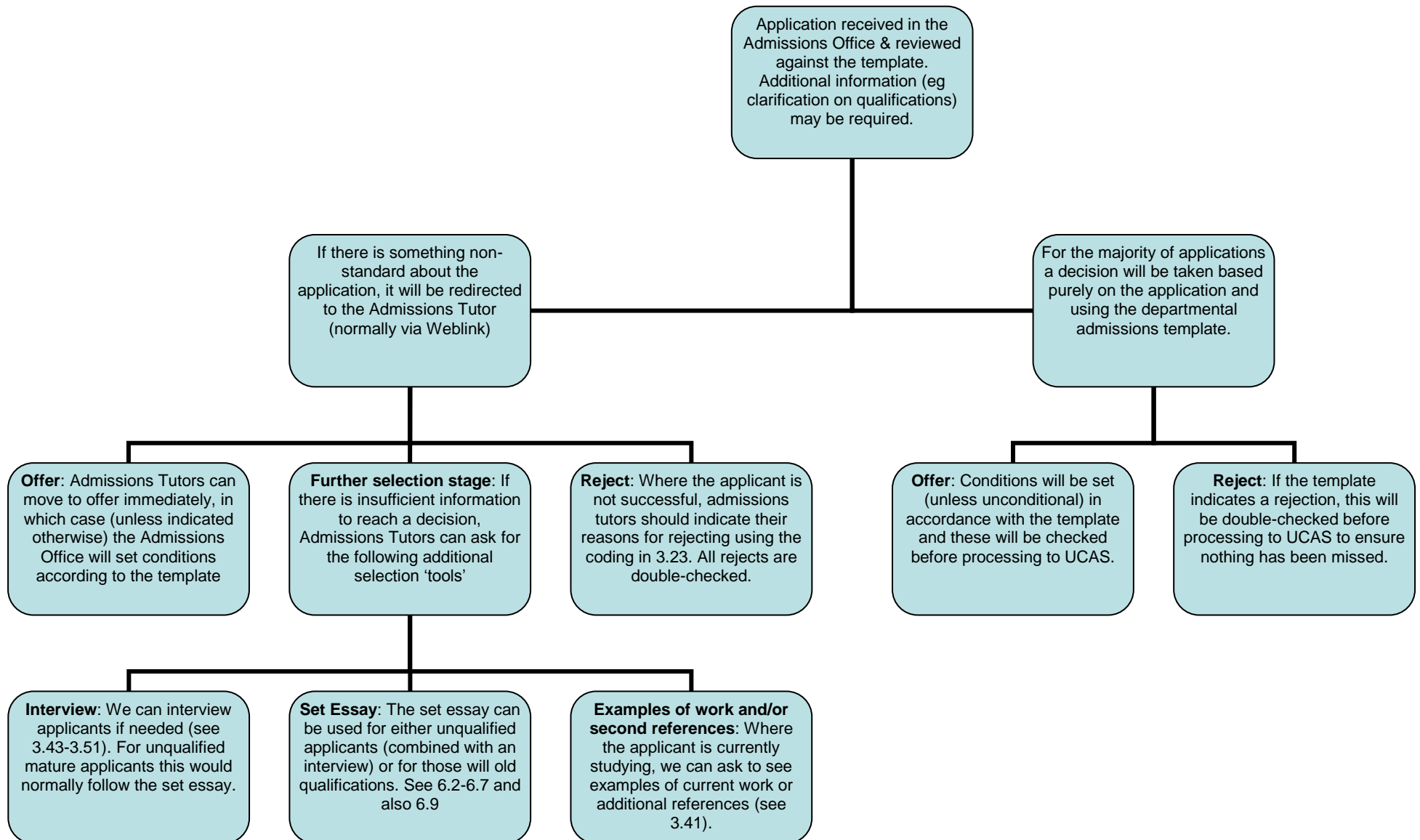
- 3.2 UCAS operates a number of deadlines. The key dates are as follows:

Date	Implication
15 <sup>th</sup> October	Closing date for Oxbridge, Medicine <sup>3</sup> , Dentistry & Veterinary Science
15 <sup>th</sup> January	Closing date for all other applications. All applications received at UCAS by this deadline <b>must</b> be given equal consideration and courses cannot be deemed 'full' until all 'on-time' applications have been considered. <i>Note: although the deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> January, paper copy forms themselves may not arrive at the University until well into February.</i>  After 15 <sup>th</sup> January UCAS will continue to receive and process applications, but copy forms will be marked 'Post 15 Jan' and universities are permitted to reject on the grounds that programmes are full.  We advise anyone applying via the unqualified route to apply before 15 <sup>th</sup> January to allow time for essays/interviews (see 6.2-6.7).
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Final closing date at UCAS for applications being considered through the main application scheme. Applications received at UCAS after 30 <sup>th</sup> June will <b>not</b> be passed to HEIs. Instead applicants will be put into Clearing and will be sent the appropriate Clearing information by UCAS (see 11.14).

- 3.3 In addition to the above, UCAS operates a series of deadlines by which time the University has to make decisions on applications (known as **Reject by Default** dates or **RBDs**). On these dates, if we haven't reached a decision on an application, UCAS will reject the applicant on our behalf. Equally there are **Decline by Default** dates (DBDs), which are deadlines given to applicants by which time they must have responded to offers or their offers will be automatically declined. If applicants find themselves in this position they must speak to Admissions (☎ 01273 678416).
- 3.4 The Admissions Office will obviously be working within the RBD deadlines and will ensure that processing of decisions is undertaken prior to RBDs. Admissions Tutors will be given plenty of warning of approaching RBDs should they have any application forms needing a decision and it is vital that we get UCAS forms back with decisions by these dates.

<sup>3</sup> Applications to the Brighton & Sussex Medical School (BSMS) are processed by the University of Brighton.

### 3.5 Flowchart of basic UG admissions process:



## THE INITIAL CHECKS

3.6 The receipt of the paper copy UCAS form triggers the start of the selection process. The Admissions Office will undertake a number of checks, identifying by coloured sticker or highlighter the following:

- applicants applying for **deferred entry**, which they will have indicated with a 'Y' (yes) in part 3, column (j) of the UCAS form. If the year shown at the very top of the UCAS form (in the centre) indicates deferred entry this will be highlighted in **pink**;
- applicants whose **total choice number** is 1. The number of applications any one student has made will be shown as 'Choices' at the top of the form, below the UCAS number (the maximum is 5). Where there is only *one* application this will be highlighted in **turquoise**, indicating the applicant has only made one application to us and nowhere else;
- applicants making more than one application to Sussex. These forms will have a **red 'DUPLICATE'** stamp added to the top left-hand corner. We will receive one copy form for each application made by that applicant, so Admissions Tutors need to be aware that there are duplicate copies of an application, which may or may not be applications for degrees within the same Department. The degree to which the application relates is highlighted in pink in section 3 (and the UCAS code is shown at the top, in the centre);
- applicants declaring a **disability or special need** in part 2 of the UCAS form. These will be highlighted in **blue**. Admissions Tutors should disregard any declared special need or disability, decisions should be made on academic ability alone. However, Admissions Tutors can (and do) consider the potential impact of serious special needs or disabilities on an applicant's performance to date and may take this into account in deciding whether to offer and what conditions to set. The Student Support Unit will contact the applicant about any declared disability/special need *after* offer (see Chapter 9);
- applicants seeking direct **entry direct into the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year**. These will be identified in part 3 of the application, column (g), where a 2 or 3 indicates a wish for advanced standing. The Admissions Office will highlight this by adding a **yellow 'yr entry' sticker** (plus a blank yellow sticker in the space used by Admissions Co-ordinators at the bottom right-hand-side of the form). The Admissions Office will also ensure that relevant information (eg. an academic reference & course details) has been obtained in accordance with departmental admissions templates. Applications for advanced standing will invariably need to go to Admissions Tutors for a decision. If an offer is indicated then Admissions Tutors need to make clear what point of entry is being offered by adding this to the 'yr entry' sticker (ie. 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year). The University does **not** consider applications for 3<sup>rd</sup>/final year entry, so these applicants will be asked if they wish to be considered for 2<sup>nd</sup> year entry. If no, they will be rejected in accordance with all admissions templates;
- applicants who have indicated in part 4 that they have **previously attended Sussex** (highlighted in **orange**). If applicants completed more than one year here (and therefore already have credits from Sussex) they are actually cases for re-admission and should be written to explaining this (see 10.13-10.14). Those who did not complete a year (or who graduated from Sussex) are considered via UCAS, but Admissions Tutors may wish to obtain their old University record (contact the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator);
- applicants who have previously applied to Sussex (top-right-hand corner, the 'UC' number indicates how many times an applicant has placed an application via UCAS; UC01 means 1<sup>st</sup> application, UC02 the 2<sup>nd</sup>, UC03 the 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.; where it is not UC01 this will be highlighted in orange). Where the applicant applied in the last cycle, the old UCAS form should be attached. If 'not Susx' is handwritten on the form it means that the applicant's previous UCAS applications did not include Sussex, so there is no earlier form;
- applicants from schools and colleges within either of the Progression Accords and who have indicated this in the 'further details' column (3(f) on the UCAS form). The Office will highlight

these in **turquoise** (see Chapter 7). In many cases these applicants are guaranteed offers and applications will be processed immediately within the Admissions Office. Occasionally, however, these forms may be sent to the Admissions Tutor for a decision (eg where predictions fall below the guarantee offer);

- applicants applying from one of the University's widening participation initiatives. These forms will have been stamped **SEAS** or **Aimhigher Sussex** as appropriate in **red**. These applicants are also normally expected to receive offers, and most templates indicate how to proceed. Where predictions are lower than the standard offer, Admissions Tutors will be asked to consider whether a reduced offer is appropriate. If predictions are too low, these applicants can be rejected (see Chapter 5);
- applicants who have been in care (see 5.7). Research undertaken by the Frank Buttle Trust has shown that children who have spent time in care have much lower participation rates in higher education than other young people. Indications that an applicant has been in care (ie. A, B, C, D, E in the Time in Care box) will be highlighted in **pink** and a **red** triangular sticker will be added to the form to highlight the potential WP nature of the application;
- applicants whose parents have not attended university (see 5.6). The UCAS application asks applicants to indicate whether their parents, step-parents or guardians have any Higher Education qualifications, such as a degree, diploma or certificate of higher education. An 'N' (ie. no) in the Parents' Higher Education box will therefore be highlighted in **pink** as a widening participation indicator. Please note, however, that an applicant answering 'Y' (Yes), 'P' (Prefer not to say) or blank (Don't know) must not be disadvantaged by this declaration;
- applicants declaring a relevant **criminal conviction**. The forms will have the **green** criminal convictions sticker attached. This conviction will need to be cleared by the Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions before any offer can be processed. The initial decision, however, is to be taken on academic grounds alone and the conviction will be followed up by the Admissions Office if that initial decision is either to offer or to interview (see Chapter 8);
- applicants who do not meet the University's general entrance requirements (e.g. 2 A-levels or a Double Award, Access to HE Diploma, BTEC National Diploma, IBD, etc.). The forms will be stamped **UQ** in **green**. If the applicants are applying on the strength of wider experience then they can, if suitable, be considered for the unqualified route (see 6.2 to 6.7). Unqualified school leaving applicants, however, can only normally be considered for foundation years (assuming one exists) and will otherwise need to be rejected (see 3.23 to 3.29); and
- applicants who already hold a qualification that is equal to or higher than the one they are applying for. ELQ will be stamped on the form to indicate that the applicant is applying for an 'equal or lower qualification' to one they have already achieved (see 3.8 below).

3.7 As part of the initial checks, the Admissions Office will also identify applicants whose fee-status is something other than 'Home/EU' (HEU). If there are indications that an applicant may not be HEU for fees purposes the following will indicate their fee status:

<b>Sticker or stamp</b>	<b>Fee status</b>
Yellow sticker	O'Seas for fees (and therefore outside target - see 3.70-3.73)
Blue 'H' stamp	Home/EU ( <i>note</i> : forms are only stamped 'H' if something indicates applicant might be non-HEU)
Gold '4' sticker	Channel Islands/Isle of Man (therefore outside target – see 3.70-3.73)
Red sticker	Fee status pending (ie. unclear – will be followed up after any offer)
ELQ stamp	Applicant has an existing qualification equal to or higher than the one being applied for. Although HEU they are outside target (see 3.8)
No stamp/sticker	Applicant is HEU for fees purposes



- 3.8 Changes to funding arrangements a few years ago now mean that students who already hold a qualification which is equal to (or higher than) the one they are applying to take (eg. students wishing to take a second degree) are outside the University's student number control. Whereas in the past the University received funding for these students as part of the teaching grant, ELQ students (as they are known) can no longer be included in the University's HEU target. The University therefore charges them a separate, and higher, fee (which until 2012 has been mapped against the annually negotiated Island fees). For 2012, it is anticipated that the ELQ fee will be set at £9,000 (in line with other HEU students), but ELQ students will remain outside the student number control (see also 3.70 to 3.73).

## THE DEPARTMENTAL TEMPLATE

- 3.9 Once the initial checks are completed, the UCAS form will be passed to the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator, who will review the application against the departmental admissions template. Where the outcome is clear, the Admissions Co-ordinator will move immediately to offer or reject. For offers this will include setting the appropriate conditions as defined in the template. All decisions will then be double-checked within the Admissions Office prior to transmission to UCAS. Following offers an informal offer letter (and invitation to visit) will be sent to the applicant. ***In the majority of cases the decision to offer or reject can be taken centrally by the Admissions Co-ordinator in accordance with the departmental template.***
- 3.10 However, where there is any uncertainty about the application (eg predictions or grades are borderline and/or there may be indications of widening participation, aspects of the personal statement or reference cause concern, applicant is applying via the unqualified route or for advanced standing, etc.), the application will be passed to the Admissions Tutor for a decision. In most cases, Admissions Tutors will be able to view the application online via UCAS' Weblink service (at <https://update.ucas.co.uk/netupdate2/Welcome.htm>). The Admissions Co-ordinator can provide the username and password.

## WHAT TO CONSIDER ON THE UCAS FORM

- 3.11 The UCAS application divides broadly into four main areas:
- qualifications (both those taken and those pending);
  - academic reference;
  - personal statement;
  - contextual information
- 3.12 **Qualifications** information is shown in sections 5A and 5B of the copy application form (and in the *Qualifications* tab on Weblink). Qualifications split into those already achieved and those still to be taken. Information on the most common qualifications received at Sussex is given in the *Qualifications Handbook* (copies of which are at the back of this guide). Additionally, information about non-standard qualifications will be provided by the Admissions Co-ordinator on individual applications. If this is missing, or more information is needed, Admissions Tutors will be able to find details about international qualifications on the **UK NARIC** website. Details about how to access this are shown in the introduction to the *Qualifications Handbook*. The username and password can be obtained from the Admissions Office. Alternatively, further information can be asked for from the Admissions Office.
- 3.13 The key first check when reviewing qualifications is to ensure that the applicant meets the University's **general entrance requirement** and shows evidence of a broad educational background. Applicants who do not meet these minimum requirements should normally have

been stamped UQ by the Admissions Office and flagged on MAS. Information on how we process **unqualified** applicants is given in paragraphs 6.2 to 6.7, but school leavers without the minimum requirements will normally be rejected (R1 – unqualified).

- 3.14 In addition to the general entrance requirement, the second check is to ensure that the applicant has met (or can meet) any **specific entrance requirements** published by the department (for example, grade B in GCSE level Mathematics for Psychology, A-level standard Chemistry for Chemistry, etc.). Departmental templates indicate how to proceed in cases where the applicant does not meet these requirements. Where applicants are still taking the qualifications that meet these specific requirements, the conditions set *must* include achieving this qualification (at the appropriate grade).
- 3.15 The final check with regards to qualifications is to see whether the academic record shows results at the levels expected by the department. Each degree programme has a **standard offer level** and applicants are expected to have achieved (or be able to achieve) the required level for entry. The University should not be setting applicants up to fail, so care needs to be taken to ensure that the applicant will cope with the academic demands of the degree and that applicants can reasonably be expected to meet the conditions of any offer set.
- 3.16 The majority of applicants are still studying at the point when they apply. Normally, information on predictions for pending qualifications is contained within the **Reference**. Please remember that these are only *predictions* and should therefore **not** be treated in the same way as actual results. Although predictions give an indication of likely attainment, they should never be viewed as concrete. It is also not possible to make assumptions about whether predictions are likely to be too high or too low. Experience at making predictions varies from teacher to teacher and from school to school. Although there is some evidence that predictions are often overly confident; there is also evidence that schools with lower progression rates into HE tend to under-predict. Predicted grades, therefore, should be used only as a guide to the likely level of attainment. Admissions Tutors may also wish to take into account earlier *actual* results as shown in the completed qualifications section (eg GCSEs, AS results). However, some care needs to be taken when reviewing AS results, as the School will have a clearer picture of how close an applicant is to grade boundaries and what modular resits the applicant may be taking. In other words, whilst strong AS results are encouraging; weaker results should not automatically be a cause for concern if the school/college is predicting grades in line with our standard offer level.
- 3.17 The **Reference** will obviously also give information about the applicant's performance in their studies and, normally, more general information about the applicant. References may also contain contextual information about the school or college and any special circumstances or difficulties the student may have encountered. All those involved in Admissions are reminded of the University's commitment to widening participation (see Chapter 5) and are asked to note the success with which the School or College achieves entry into higher education and to give sympathetic consideration to applicants from Schools and Colleges that do not usually send a large percentage of students into higher education. From the 2012 cycle, UCAS are also including school contextual data via UCAS Weblink. This can be accessed by looking at the *Education* tab on on Weblink. The Education tab will include details on average A-level performance, as well as possible measures such as % with free school means and % entitled to EMA. *[Please note: the average A-level points shown here does **not** use the UCAS Tariff. Instead it is a Ofqual score where an A\* at A-level is 300, an A is 270, B is 240, C is 210, D is 180 and E is 150, with AS-levels scoring half. There is also no 'upper ceiling' to the score].*

In addition, the UCAS forms of applicants coming through specific widening participation schemes (for example SEAS or Aimhigher Sussex) will have been flagged by the Admissions Office (see **Chapter 5**).

**Note: If Admissions Tutors identify WP candidates themselves they should indicate these to their Admissions Co-ordinator for appropriate flagging. In addition, if Admissions**

***Tutors are sent UCAS forms because an applicant appears to meet WP criteria, the Admissions Tutor needs to indicate to the Admissions Co-ordinator if they wish to make a reduced offer (see Chapter 5).***

- 3.18 The other key section on the application form is the **Personal Statement**. The personal statement is the applicant's opportunity to 'sell' him or herself to the University. A good personal statement will be a well written, articulate account of why the applicant has chosen their particular discipline and a wider explanation of who they are. For disciplines not already being studied by the applicant, it is an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of that subject (perhaps in the shape of wider reading) and for professionally focused programmes (such as Social Work) it provides space to talk about work experience or other evidence of professional suitability. Aside from their interest in, and understanding of, a particular subject, applicants are also encouraged to talk about their wider (and often non-academic) interests, responsibilities and achievements. Each admissions template requires the Admissions Co-ordinator to check the personal statement to ensure that the applicant shows an understanding of, interest in and commitment to their chosen degree. The Admissions Office will also check that statements read well, are grammatically sound and of suitable length and depth. If there is any concern, applications will be sent to Admissions Tutors for checking. Where applications are sent to Admissions Tutors for consideration (for whatever reason), selectors are recommended to read personal statements very carefully and these statements should play a significant role in deciding whether to offer a place. The personal statement may also contain other 'contextual' information on the applicant, including any difficulties they may have faced or special circumstances that we may wish to take into account as part of the selection process.

*In reviewing Personal Statements, however, Admissions Tutors should take into account the likely level of advice given to applicants. For example, international applicants may be less aware of the importance of this section; similarly 'mature' students applying outside of school or college may have received far less (if any) advice on how to complete this part of the UCAS application.*

- 3.19 Above the personal statement there is also a small section for details of the applicant's paid employment to date. This may be of particular relevance for disciplines linked to professions where work experience may have influenced an applicant's decision. More generally work experience may provide an indication of wider skills, which may strengthen any application. The space for employment, however, is very limited and this can pose particular problems for older applicants. Applicants do have the opportunity to send in additional information direct to the University, such as detailed CVs and samples of written work. Any additional material will be attached to the UCAS form by the Admissions Office and should be taken into account accordingly. Should a UCAS form indicate that additional information has been sent in and this is *not* attached, please contact the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator and they will investigate. Additional information is often sent in by mature students and further advice on considering applications from applicants applying on the strength of experience can be found in **Chapter 6**
- 3.20 There are also a number of sections of the application which may help in providing additional contextual information. As described in 3.6, the Admissions Office will, where relevant, highlight widening participation indicators such as the *Time in care* and *Parents' Higher Education*. There may also be similar indicators in the *Activity 1* and *Activity 2* sections of the application (see 5.8). Even where these sections contain no additional information, Admissions Tutors are reminded to check section 4 (or the *Education* tab on Weblink) for a listing of all educational establishments attended. This information may be relevant in building up a picture of the applicant. For example, if an applicant attended an 11-16 school for their GCSEs and has now transferred to a sixth form elsewhere, the Admissions Tutor may want to take into account the earlier school's performance as well as the current sixth form. The new information in the *Education* tab mentioned in 3.17 will include data on both the current school/college and any previous institutions.

## INDICATING THE DECISION

- 3.21 As noted in 3.9, it is anticipated that in the majority of cases the decision on an application can be taken centrally based on the departmental template. However, if there is any uncertainty, the UCAS application will be passed to the Admissions Tutor for a decision. In these cases, the Admissions Tutor has the following four options upon first reviewing the application:
- **reject** (see 3.23-3.29);
  - **offer** (see 3.30-3.40);
  - **request further information** (see 3.41-3.42); **or**
  - **interview** (see 3.43-3.51)
- 3.22 If further information and/or an interview is required, this can be obtained and a final decision delayed until the further information is provided by the applicant and/or the interview attended, but assuming there is enough information to make a final decision immediately, Admissions Tutors (or the Admissions Co-ordinator where the decision is being taken centrally) should simply put **either** an 'R' in the Decision box for a reject (plus add the relevant reject code) **or** an 'O' for an offer<sup>4</sup>. In making an offer, unless the Admissions Tutor chooses to add conditions (eg reduced grades for a WP applicant) the Admissions Co-ordinator will simply apply the appropriate conditions based on the departmental admissions template.

## REJECTIONS BY THE ADMISSIONS TUTOR

- 3.23 If, having considered the application and any further information (including possibly an interview), the final decision is to reject then an 'R' should be entered in the 'Decision' box and the UCAS form initialled by the Admissions Tutor (or Admissions Co-ordinator). It was also agreed (at the Informal Admissions Meeting in May 2004) that the Admissions Tutor (or for centralised decisions the Admissions Co-ordinator) should indicate the main reason(s) for the rejection using one or more of the following codes (which should be written at the space below the Decision box on the UCAS form):

Code	Reason	Further explanation
R1	Unqualified	Applicant does not meet the specific entrance requirements for the degree (eg. No A-level Chemistry for a Chemistry degree or no GCSE Maths, grade C for Psychology) and/or is below the University's general (minimum) entrance requirements
R2	<i>Under-qualified</i>	Either the applicant's existing grades are below the standard offer level or their predicted grades are too low to warrant an offer
R3	Poor understanding of the degree programme	The applicant has failed to demonstrate an understanding of their chosen degree. They may have the academic grades but have misunderstood the nature of the discipline or not appreciated the way it is offered at Sussex (eg. they think Psychology is 'counselling').
R4	Not suited for the degree programme	The applicant may have the academic ability for the degree and may understand the discipline, but has failed to demonstrate other skills necessary for the

---

<sup>4</sup> Increasingly Admissions Tutors will be looking at the application via Weblink (rather than the paper copy form). In these cases the standard approach would be to email the decision back to the Admissions Co-ordinator.

		programme and therefore does not appear suited to the degree. This might be particularly true of disciplines looking for skills and abilities beyond the merely academic (eg. suitability for a profession).
R5	Poor Personal Statement	The applicant may be qualified and have the right grades, but the Personal Statement is weak and the Department wishes to reject. This could be weak in terms of content, grammar, structure and/or length.
R5a	Little or no mention of chosen subject	This code is specifically for poor Personal Statements where the statement is weak because the applicant has made little or no mention of the discipline they are applying for.
R6	Poor Reference	The applicant may be qualified and have the right grades, but the Reference shows areas of concern.
R7	Weak Written Work	The applicant has provided examples of work or has been asked to write the set essay and the work is not up to a suitable standard.
R8	No written work	The applicant failed to provide the requested written work and therefore is a rejection.
R9	Weak Interview	The applicant was asked to attend an interview, but did not perform well. <i>Please note 3.24 below.</i>
R10	No show for interview	The applicant failed to attend their interview.
R11	Weak application	This may be a combination of a number of the above which leads the Department to choose to reject.
R12	Other	Please specify on the reverse of the UCAS form
R13	Criminal Convictions	<i>For use by Admissions Office:</i> The applicant is being rejected on grounds of their Criminal Conviction following consideration by the Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions (see Chapter 8)
R14	Failure to reply	<i>For use by the Admissions Office:</i> The applicant has failed to send in information requested (eg on their qualifications) and it is impossible to make a decision without this, hence rejection.
R15	<i>No longer in use</i>	<i>Former code for use by BIMM</i>
R16	Late – programme full	<i>For use by Admissions Office:</i> The applicant would have been qualified for an offer, but their chosen programme or department is now full. No choice but to reject. <i>Note: this code can only be used for applications received at UCAS after 15<sup>th</sup> January. Note 2: applicants rejected for R16 are formally notified that it was because the programme was full using a short-code via UCAS.</i>

- |     |                                 |  |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| R17 | Too late to investigate further | <i>For use by Admissions Office:</i> More information is required from the applicant in order to progress the application, but the application was received so close to the final UCAS deadline on 30 <sup>th</sup> June that there is simply not enough time to collect the required information before the final DBD. No choice but to reject. |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|
- 3.24 If the applicant was interviewed then it would be helpful if the full reason for the rejection could be included in the interview notes either attached to the UCAS form or written on the reverse (see 3.49).
- 3.25 If it is felt that another degree programme within the University would be more appropriate, please indicate this and the Admissions Office will arrange for the form to be re-directed to the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator or Tutor.
- 3.26 Admissions Tutors are also reminded, when rejecting applicants for 1<sup>st</sup> year entry, to consider the possibility of offering changes of course to foundation years where these exist. A number of departments, however, do not routinely 'down-grade' applicants to the foundation year and instead will only consider those who specifically apply for Year 0. This is equally acceptable. It would also be appropriate to consider changes to the point of entry for unsuccessful 2<sup>nd</sup> year applicants (eg offering 1<sup>st</sup> year entry to someone originally requesting direct entry to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year). See also 10.11.
- 3.27 All recommendations for rejection will be double-checked by Rob Evans, Head of Admissions, or Louise Guy, Undergraduate Admissions Officer, with forms re-directed to other Departments as appropriate.
- 3.28 If an Admissions Tutor wants to recommend a course of action to the applicant (for example, that they should do an Access HE Diploma and re-apply) then this can be indicated and the Admissions Office will write to the applicant to convey this advice.
- 3.29 If, following a rejection, Admissions Tutors receive correspondence asking for feedback on the reason for rejection this can be passed to the Admissions Office for a reply. Details of our published policy on feedback can be found online at [www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback).

## OFFERS BY ADMISSIONS TUTORS

- 3.30 If, having considered the application and any further information (including possibly an interview), the final decision is to offer then an 'O' should be entered in the 'Decision' box and the UCAS form initialled by the Admissions Tutor (or Admissions Co-ordinator).
- 3.31 The Admissions Tutor does **not** need to indicate whether the offer is conditional or unconditional, nor does (s)he need to set the conditions. Conditions will be set, in accordance with the agreed departmental template, by the Admissions Co-ordinator.
- 3.32 If an Admissions Tutor has a case where (s)he wants to set a particular condition (especially where it is different to the established template) then the Admissions Tutor is welcome to indicate conditions in the space below the Decision box and the Admissions Office will take note of this. It is not, however, normally expected that Admissions Tutors will set conditions.
- 3.33 If an Admissions Tutor reviews an application where they wish to offer, but on a different degree to the one applied for, this can be handled by the Admissions Office, but the Admissions Tutor needs to make clear in the space below the Decision box that the offer is for a different degree programme (for example, offering a BEng or BSc rather than an M-level degree).
- 3.34 In cases where applicants are to receive offers, but are still studying for a qualification, that offer will generally be conditional upon the outcome of whatever qualification(s) is (are) being studied. On the other hand, where applicants receiving offers already have their qualifications (or where the applicant was considered via the unqualified route) the offer will normally be unconditional.

- 3.35 ***In reviewing applications from students who already have their qualifications, Admissions Tutors are reminded that offers should not normally be made recent school leavers whose existing A-level results (or other qualifications) are significantly below the standard offer level for the subject applied to. It should be noted that as unconditional offers will count in the overall quota numbers, offers to applicants with lower results may either limit the number of other offers that can be made later in the cycle or may restrict the number of applicants who can be taken at confirmation as 'near-misses'.***
- 3.36 It is recommended that offers are not made to applicants with results more than one grade below the standard offer level (and not even then in competitive subjects). The University's offer levels are clearly set out in the University prospectus and many applicants choose to resit A-levels in order to try and achieve the necessary levels. It should therefore be noted that applicants who are not taking resits, but who have lower results, are probably applying in full awareness that they do not have our stated normal requirements.
- 3.37 If there are special circumstances that may warrant an offer to someone with lower results (for example, difficulties during the examinations such as bereavement or evidence that the applicant falls within widening participation criteria) then the Admissions Tutor may decide to proceed with an offer. ***It is, however, requested that in these cases a note be added, setting out briefly the reasons for the offer (which might, for example, include having interviewed the applicant or looked at examples of work).*** Admissions Tutors may also wish to consider whether the applicant had opportunities to resit their qualifications in order to improve their grades. In cases of applicants applying with existing grades who are not currently studying or taking resits, it is also possible for Admissions Tutors to ask them to complete the set essay (see 3.41).
- 3.38 Once the decision to offer has been taken, the Admissions Co-ordinator will use the admissions template to establish any conditions. Once the offer has been written up by the Admissions Co-ordinator it will be double checked within the Admissions Office before being transmitted to UCAS. The applicant will then be sent an informal offer letter and invitation to visit the University.
- 3.39 As part of writing up and checking the offer, the Admissions Office will ensure that all necessary clearances have been given (e.g. for applicants with declared convictions). Only once all these clearances have been given can the formal offer be sent to UCAS and the offer letter sent out.
- 3.40 In cases where Admissions Tutors feel the applicant has a widening participation background which has not already been identified (see Chapter 5) then this should be notified to the Admissions Co-ordinator in order that the application is flagged appropriately. In reviewing WP applicants, Admissions Tutors will need to make clear to the Admissions Co-ordinator if they wish to make a reduced offer.

#### **IF FURTHER INFORMATION IS REQUIRED TO REACH A DECISION**

- 3.41 If, when reviewing the application, it is impossible to reach a final decision to offer or reject and further information or an interview is required in order to reach a decision then the Admissions Office can follow up on this. Admissions Tutors should notify the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator, indicating what further information is required. The Admissions Office will then contact the applicant to request the additional details. Further selection options open to Admissions Tutors would be an interview (see 3.43); asking for examples of work from a current or recent course; seeing an updated or additional reference; asking further information about qualifications; or asking the applicant to complete the set essay (this can either be combined with an interview as part of the 'unqualified route', see 6.2-6.7, or as a stand-alone set essay – although this should only be used for someone *not* currently studying).
- 3.42 ***Please note: It may sound obvious, but if further information or interview is required then a decision should not be marked on the form in the Decision box or notified to the Admissions Office. The UCAS form will be returned to the Admissions Tutor for a decision once the further information has been obtained or when the interview is taking place and the final decision should be taken at that time.***

## IF AN INTERVIEW IS REQUIRED

- 3.43 Although interviewing is now uncommon at Sussex<sup>5</sup>, some departments may choose to operate a policy of routinely interviewing certain categories of applicant (e.g. Access) as part of the selection process, whilst other subjects will find that from time to time there are applicants that they need to interview in order to ascertain their suitability for a degree programme.
- 3.44 The most common applicants who may need an interview are students applying on the strength of experience and advice on reviewing such applications is given in **Chapter 6**. School leavers, however, can also be interviewed if required.
- 3.45 If the Admissions Tutor decides that an interview is required, this will normally be arranged by the Admissions Office<sup>6</sup>. The Office will endeavour to arrange for the interview to take place on an Admissions Day to give the applicant the best experience and to remove the need for the applicant to visit again.
- 3.46 If an Admissions Tutor wishes to interview an applicant, but also wants to obtain further information, then that further information should always be requested **before** the interview (or an applicant asked to bring the information with them to the interview). **The Admissions Office will not normally request further information after an interview.**
- 3.47 If an interviewer is unable to interview on a particular date for which interviews have been timetabled, the Admissions Office must be informed as soon as possible as interviews are normally arranged at least a month in advance. It is then the responsibility of the Interviewer in consultation with the Admissions Tutor to provide a substitute if they are unable to conduct the interview themselves.
- 3.48 If the Admissions Tutor is not conducting the interview they must ensure that the academic undertaking the interview is fully briefed and all interviewers are reminded that the interview is a two-way process, which can be used as a recruitment as well as a selection tool. Everyone involved in interviewing should be aware of the University's commitment to equality and diversity (see <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/>) and the University's policy on this subject (which can be found at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/documents/equalitydiversitypolicy.pdf>).
- 3.49 Interviewers should always provide written comment on the interview either on the back of the UCAS form or on a separate interview record, which is then stapled inside the UCAS form<sup>7</sup>. Any comments/notes should be dated and the interviewer's name clearly recorded. In some instances, Departments/Schools have produced interview report forms and guidance notes for interviewers (for example, Law). If Departments or Schools want advice on producing similar report forms they should speak to Louise Guy in the first instance. If report forms are completed these *must* be attached to the UCAS form. Comments from interviewers are particularly useful during the confirmation process when re-considering applicants who have not met the conditions of the offer. Information such as whether the applicant was particularly impressive or whether the conditions should be strictly adhered to will be considered at confirmation (where possible).
- 3.50 After the interview, the Admissions Tutor should indicate the final decision in the Decision box stamped on the bottom of the front of the UCAS form. An 'R' indicates a rejection (see 3.23 to 3.29); an 'O' an offer (see 3.30 to 3.40). Please return forms promptly after interview so that the applicant can be notified of the decisions as quickly as possible. *Interviewers should **not** give an indication of the outcome of the interview to the applicant at the time of the interview (and, instead, simply explain that they will hear shortly via UCAS).*

## APPLICANTS NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THE INTERVIEW:

- 3.51 Admissions Tutors must appreciate that some applicants may not be able to attend the interview, for financial, geographic or other reasons. If an applicant is unable to come to interview then the Admissions Tutor must make a final decision from the information provided on the UCAS form.

---

<sup>5</sup> Social Work is the only department with a mandatory interview.

<sup>6</sup> Social Work, however, organise their own interviews.

<sup>7</sup> Undergraduate Admissions Sub-Committee, Minute A/7/5.



Obviously, applicants who simply fail to show up for their interview would normally be rejected on these grounds (R10 – no show).

## EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

- 3.52 Admissions Tutors and Admissions Co-ordinators who deal with selection for degrees involving European Languages are reminded of the need to ensure that the applicant is qualified for take the language component (which generally means A-level standard, grade B, in the chosen language). When the conditions are set for any offer, they will need to specify grade B in the relevant language.
- 3.53 For joint degrees involving Language (eg. Geography and a Language), once the offer has been processed, the Admissions Office will amend the MAS record to show the correct language programme code (ie. Geography & Italian) as opposed to the generic 'Geography & a Language' UCAS code.
- 3.54 The requirements for students wishing to study a language as part of their degree are as follows:
- a) For the dual language degrees (French & Italian; French & Spanish; Italian & Spanish)**
- A-level (or equivalent) in one of the chosen languages, with at least a grade B. If the second language is Italian or Spanish this can be taken *ab initio*. French, however, must be at A-level standard.
- b) Joint degrees with a non-language subject (eg. Anthropology & a Language) or Law with Proficiency in a Language and a Year Abroad (UCAS code M1RY)**
- A-level (or equivalent) in *the chosen* language, with at least a grade B.
- Note: The new opportunities to gain proficiency in a language within a range of single honours programmes will not have any specific entry requirements.*
- 3.55 If Admissions Tutors or Admissions Co-ordinators have any doubts about the suitability of an applicant for language studies, then the Admissions Office will liaise with the Sussex Centre for Language Studies and the Admissions Tutor for Languages.

## DIAGNOSTIC TEST

- 3.56 If applicants have evidence of language ability, but do not have a formal language qualification it is possible to arrange for them to take a diagnostic test to assess their ability. Decisions about the use of a diagnostic test will be taken by the Admissions Tutor for Languages.

## SPECIAL APPROVALS

- 3.57 Whilst it is normally the decision of the Admissions Tutor (or the Admissions Co-ordinator) whether or not to offer a place, there are 3 instances where the decision needs the approval of another authority. These are:
- (i) Approval of the Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions**
- The Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions needs to consider the details of any applicant declaring a relevant, unspent criminal conviction. The criminal convictions procedure will be initiated by the Admissions Office for any applicants where the Admissions Tutor (or the departmental template) indicates an offer (or interview) and where a relevant conviction has been declared (see **Chapter 8**);
- (ii) Entry into the Year 3**
- Although the University does not normally consider applicants for entry direct into the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year, the regulations do actually allow admission at this level. However, in the extremely rare instance of a department having an applicant they wish to admit to 3<sup>rd</sup> year, the approvals of the Head of School, Exam Board Chair and Head of Department are all required (see **Chapter 10** for full details). Approval is required for entry into the 3<sup>rd</sup> year as this involves the importation of

marks rather than simply credit. Consequently an 'Approval for Entry into Year 3' form needs completing and signing *before* the offer can be processed. This form indicates how the existing results will be imported and sets out what courses the applicant will have to undertake in his or her third/final year (as well as how much credit will be assigned to the courses). A copy of this form is sent to the applicant for their information with their informal offer letter once the offer has been processed with UCAS.

*Note: The formal, published statement on transfers clearly states that the University does not consider applicants for 3<sup>rd</sup> year entry. Cases of considering final year entry are extremely rare and need to have very persuasive reasons.*

### **(iii) Applicants below the general entrance requirements**

The approval of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for admissions is required to admit a school leaver or recent school leaver who does not meet the University's general entrance requirement of 2 A-levels (or equivalent). Additional approval is not required for applicants applying on the strength of experience, who are assessed as having the necessary skills for admission, but school leavers are expected to have qualifications which meet the minimum requirements (even for entry to foundation years).

## **INAPPROPRIATE CORRESPONDENCE FROM AN APPLICANT**

- 3.58 In the extremely unusual event that someone at the University receives what they feel is inappropriate correspondence from an applicant (for example, offensive or unpleasant) then they should contact Louise Guy immediately and she will investigate.
- 3.59 In these very rare cases, if it is deemed appropriate, the University may wish to withdraw any offer that has been made and may decide to reject an applicant. The University (as represented by the Admissions Office) would need to write to the candidate to notify them that the offer was being rescinded and to give them time to respond. In withdrawing the offer, the University would also need to negotiate with UCAS.

## **COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR FEEDBACK FROM UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS**

- 3.60 The full policy on feedback, appeals and complaints for undergraduate applicants can be found online at [www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback) and applicants should be directed to this policy. Please note that the complaints and appeals procedures for applicants is deliberately *different* to the procedures for actual Sussex students. Please ensure you refer applicants to this admissions complaints procedure rather than the University's standard student complaints processes.
- 3.61 Broadly, if an applicant wishes to request feedback on why their application has been unsuccessful, they should put their request in writing and send it to the Undergraduate Admissions Officer by post (see address on page 4) or via email to [ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk).
- 3.62 If an applicant wishes to complain about any aspect of the admissions process, which is not necessarily connected to the selection decision, or to appeal their decision (*after* having already sought feedback) then the applicant should write to Rob Evans, Head of the Admissions Office, who will then look into the matter.
- 3.63 For both feedback and complaints, it is normally the applicant, not a third party, who should submit the request. If the applicant wishes a third party to make enquiries on their behalf, a copy of the written authority to act as a third party would need to be provided along with the request for feedback or complaint. For full details see [www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback).

## **DEFERRALS**

- 3.64 Although applicants can apply for deferred entry in their application (indicating their desire for this in section 3, column (j)), many will take the decision to defer during the application cycle.
- 3.65 In these cases, applicants need to write to the Admissions Office and the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator will arrange for the place to be deferred, assuming that the programme will be

running the following year (see page 4 for Admissions Office contact details). We do need the request in writing (even if only an email).

- 3.66 Deferrals are normally allowed right up until the start of the academic year. If Admissions Tutors receive correspondence requesting a deferral, this should be passed to their Admissions Co-ordinator as soon as possible.
- 3.67 Applicants are only allowed to defer their place once. It is published University policy not to allow second deferrals as experience shows that these applicants rarely end up coming to the University. Instead, the University requires applicants who want to defer for a second time to withdraw their application and to re-apply through UCAS. Aside from the historic evidence that second deferrals only finally arrive in small numbers, the entry requirements may have changed in the intervening years and so it is more appropriate to ask them to re-apply rather than granting a second deferral.

### **REQUESTS TO CHANGE DEGREE**

- 3.68 If an applicant wishes to change their degree programme *after* having received an offer then they need to put the request in writing and send it to the Admissions Office. The request should explain why they wish to switch to the new programme and should effectively be a new personal statement reflecting upon the new discipline. The Admissions Co-ordinator for the subject the applicant wishes to join will then review the application against the departmental template (consulting the Admissions Tutor as required) and, if the change is agreed, will make the necessary amendments with UCAS and notify the applicant of the decision (including any necessary changes to the conditions of the offer). Applicants are warned in their summer mailing (in July) not to be able expect to change degree programme once they start at Sussex and are encouraged to make any change requests *before* arriving.

### **UCAS SIMILARITY DETECTION SERVICE**

- 3.69 Since 2008, UCAS have been using 'similarity detection' software on personal statements to identify cases of plagiarism and collusion within statements. Upon detection, UCAS will email the Admissions Office with details of any applicants identified as copying parts of their statement, together with an electronic copy of the personal statement with the relevant areas highlighted. The Admissions Office will then write to the applicant asking them to submit a new personal statement, in their own words. In the letter to the applicant it is explained that plagiarism is regarded by the university as a form of misconduct and such cases are taken very seriously. It is also explained to the applicant that no decision will be made on their application until the new personal statement is received. If the applicant does not submit a new personal statement, the Admissions Office will send chase letters to the applicant (a maximum of two). If the Admissions Office still has no response from the applicant, the application will be withdrawn at UCAS (for failing to reply). The applicant will be informed of the reason for withdrawal.

### **TARGETS, STUDENT NUMBER CONTROL AND AAB+**

- 3.70 Traditionally the University's funding has been linked to the teaching grant awarded by HEFCE and this has meant carefully controlled Home/EU numbers within a defined *student number control* (SNC). The only UK and other EU applicants outside the SNC were, in recent years, ELQ students (who were charged a separate fee – see 3.8). In addition to ELQ students, there are two other main categories of applicant outside SNC: (1) Overseas fee payers from outside the EU and (2) Island students (from Jersey, Guernsey and the Island of Man, who - whilst being part of the British Isles and British passport holders - are not within the UK and therefore not part of the EU).
- 3.71 Consequently, in the past the Admissions Office has been provided with clear HEU targets for each School (and department within that School) and the Admissions Office has carefully monitored the number of offers made to HEU students in order to keep the University within planned numbers. Traditionally, the Admissions Office begins providing predictions of HEU intake from May onwards (whilst also monitoring non-HEU numbers as well).

- 3.72 For 2012 entry, the Government is proposing to also remove from the student number control academically strong HEU applicants. This group of students is being very clearly defining in terms of both qualifications and grades (eg. AAB+ within A-level, 35+ points in the IB, Distinction Distinction within the BTEC National Diploma), but the change means the University will be able admit as many students at these levels as it wishes. However, the University's HEU target for students below this level (or with qualifications outside the narrowly defined list) will be reduced substantially (linked to the number of AAB+ students the University admitted in 2010).
- 3.73 At the time of publishing this Admissions Guide, information about these changes is still emerging and discussions are on-going about how we will monitor numbers within the new arrangements. It is possible, however, that we will need to differentiate not only between which students are HEU and which non-HEU, but within the former category between those who will count towards the student number control and those (AAB+) applicants who now fall outside controls. Admissions Tutors will be kept informed of developments as the cycle progresses.

## CHAPTER 4: INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS

### EU AND OVERSEAS APPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As explained in 3.7, one of the first checks done when UCAS forms first arrive in the Admissions Office is to ascertain the likely fee status of the applicant. As a result of this, applications for those who are Overseas, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or those whose fee status is unclear ('pending') are all identified. In addition, ELQ applicants are flagged (see 3.8).
- 4.2 Advice on non-UK qualifications can be found in the *Qualifications Handbook* in the rear section of the *Guide to Undergraduate Admissions*. Further information about international qualifications can also be obtained from the UK NARIC website, to which the University subscribes. Details on how to access this site can be found in the introduction to the *Qualifications Handbook*. As explained in 3.12, the username and password to access UK NARIC can be obtained from the Admissions Office. Admissions Tutors can also get further advice on international qualifications from their Admissions Co-ordinator - see the contacts section at the front of this guide. In many cases, where details of the qualification are not already contained in the *Qualifications Handbook*, advice will already have been provided by the Admissions Co-ordinator, but if more detail is needed please contact Admissions.
- 4.3 Applicants who are overseas for fees purposes or who are Channel Islands/Isle of Man are outside target Home/EU numbers (see 3.70 above). Therefore the main criteria for admission is whether the applicant is suited to, and will be able to cope with the demands of, their chosen programme. As there are not the restrictions associated with target numbers, it has been agreed that applicants outside quota numbers should be offered places if, academically, they are likely to cope. It has been agreed that this can be defined as having grades (or predicted to achieve grades) up to two below the standard A-level offer for the programme in question (e.g. BBB where the standard offer is AAB), including a good (ie grade B) result in the key subject. This policy should be taken into account when considering applicants and in setting appropriate, achievable conditions for offers. Where grades are more than two below the standard offer, the Admissions Tutor would normally need to be contacted to decide whether or not to make an offer. This policy would apply equally to other qualifications being taken by overseas fee payers.
- 4.4. The UK Border Agency has introduced significant changes to the visa regulations in recent years. Paragraphs 4.16 to 4.19 provide some detail on this, but Admissions Tutors are encouraged to re-direct questions relating to visas, CAS (ie. Certificates of Acceptance for Studies) and the points-based system to the Admissions Office. In addition, for 2012, overseas applicants to some M-level programmes in Engineering and Physics will also now be subject to ATAS clearance requirements with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (which is required prior to applying for their visa). Again the Admissions Office will advise applicants and questions can be re-directed to the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator for Engineering or Physics.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

- 4.5 As the University's teaching language is English, all applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of their ability to study in English. As part of the process undertaken by the Admissions Office to establish what (if any) conditions to set, the Admissions Office will check the applicant's English language level and will add IELTS (or similar) as part of the conditions if required.
- 4.6 In the case of applicants from Scandinavia, France, Germany, Benelux countries, Austria and Switzerland, the English language requirement may be satisfied by a good pass in English in those countries' secondary school leaving/university entrance examinations. The Admissions Office will check this and set conditions accordingly.

- 4.7 The University has two different English language requirements for undergraduate study, dependant on the School being applied to. The English language requirements for the School of Engineering & Informatics (EngInfo) and for the School of Mathematics & Physical Sciences (MPS) are slightly lower than those required for other Schools in recognition of the different language skills required<sup>8</sup>.
- 4.8 In 2011, UKBA amended their minimum English language requirements for students applying for a visa. Whilst the level UKBA require is some way below the standard English requirement we would expect, UKBA did require that the minimum level apply in all 4 elements of language (listening, reading, speaking and writing). Consequently, the University's IELTS and TOEFL requirements had to be amended in some areas to specify minimum scores in all 4 elements. Furthermore, UKBA redefined its list of recognised secure English language tests (SELTs) and produced a very short list of countries it deemed to be English language speaking (and for whom no other evidence of an English language ability would be required). Whilst UKBA recognised that universities should be allowed to independently assess the language level of the students they admit, the University has revised its list of acceptable evidence of English language ability. The Admissions Office therefore needs to check English language requirements very carefully (see also 4.10).
- 4.9 **The following are some of the English language qualifications recognised as meeting the University's requirements. Please see Appendix 2 for the full document on English language qualifications:**
- International English Language Testing System (**IELTS**) with a grade of 6.5 overall with not less than 6.0 in both the listening and writing sections and no score below 5.5 (*or for EngInfo and MPS, 6.0 overall, with 6 in each of the four components*);
  - **TOEFL** (internet-based test) with an overall score of 92, with 21 in Listening, 22 in Reading, 24 in Speaking and 25 in Writing (*or, for EngInfo and MPS, 90 overall, with 21 in Listening, 22 in Reading, 23 in Speaking and 24 in Writing*);
  - **GCSE** English at Grade C;
  - **IGCSE**: English as a second language passed at grade B or above (*or grade C for EngInfo and MPS*);
  - Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (**CPE**)<sup>9</sup> - Grade C;
  - Cambridge Advanced Certificate in English (**CAE**)<sup>10</sup> - Grade B;
  - Good scores in *both* the Writing and Critical Reading papers in the American SAT I (with at least 500+ in each), combined with the American High School diploma with a good GPA and/or APs; and
  - **Cambridge English Language 1119** (with a grade of between 1 and 6) within the Malaysian Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), awarded by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES);
- 4.10 In the past, in exceptional cases, evidence of English language could be waived with the approval of both the Admissions Tutor and the Head of School on the basis of an interview and looking at examples of written work. However, the new UKBA regulations mean that this is **no longer possible**. The only alternative for a non-native English speaker to providing evidence of English language ability that meets the list set out in Appendix 1 would be to take the relevant Pre-Sessional English course offered at the Sussex Centre for Language Studies (SCLS), details of which are available online at [www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/english](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/english) . Pre-sessional English would be acceptable as it would involve the University assessing all elements of English ability and therefore meet UKBA's new requirements.

<sup>8</sup> The Medical School has its own, higher English Language requirement.

<sup>9</sup> The Cambridge First Certificate (FCE) is below this level.

<sup>10</sup> The same as above.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTRE

- 4.11 The International Study Centre (ISC) is run by Study Group International and offers both the International Foundation Year (IFY) and the International Diploma in Business & Management (see 4.14). The former is a foundation for overseas students which provides preparation in both English Language and academic skills for students wishing to progress on to study at undergraduate level at Sussex. IFYs are offered in:
- Business, Management & Economics;
  - Computing & Mathematics;
  - Engineering & Physics;
  - Law, International Relations & Social Studies;
  - Life Sciences & Psychology; and
  - Media & Communications
- 4.12 Students apply direct to the ISC to join the foundation year (which has intakes in both September and January) and Study Group handles admissions. The University, however, guarantees progression onto certain degrees for students reaching pre-agreed levels by the end of the IFY. Students will complete a special RPA (Record of Prior Acceptance) form in the spring indicating their choice of degree for progression. The Admissions Office will then issue an offer letter to each student, confirming their choice of programme and setting the conditions of their offer to the agreed level. Once the students' results are known, and the conditions of their offer have been met, the RPA form will be processed by the Admissions Office via UCAS. (Students do not have to submit a UCAS application in the normal way.) There are two exam boards each year, in June and August. Students not reaching the required level to gain a place at Sussex will be assisted by Study Group to find suitable places elsewhere. Students at the ISC will be housed during their foundation year, but will also be offered University accommodation when they progress to Sussex (like all other new first year students).
- 4.13 Overseas applicants applying for direct entry into the 1<sup>st</sup> year at Sussex through UCAS and who are unsuccessful because they are 'unqualified' will be sent details of the ISC foundation years where an appropriate strand exists.
- 4.14 The ISC have also introduced an International Year 1 diploma in Business and Management, successful completion of which allows progression direct into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year of certain link degrees in BMEc. The process operates in the same way as IFY (except that successful students move into Year 2). There are proposals to expand the range of International Year 1 diplomas offered.
- 4.15 Admissions questions relating to the International Study Centre should be directed to the International Admissions Officer, Amy Clark (☎ 8874).

## VISA ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.16 The points-based system (PBS) introduced by UKBA for visa applications has dramatically changed the process for universities and applicants in recent years. The arrangements are complicated and subject to regular change. Admissions Tutors are advised **not** to get involved in discussions about visas with applicants and, instead, to direct applicants to the Admissions Office (in the first instance).
- 4.17 The University's immigration team within the International & Study Abroad Office are the experts on visa information and are the only staff formally allowed to advise on visa issues. Their website includes information & guidance for applicants (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/students/international/>).
- 4.18 The general situation with regard to international applicants who require a visa to study in the UK is that they will need to apply for a **Tier 4 General Student Visa**. Very broadly, for the visa

application to be successful the applicant needs to demonstrate two things: that they have sufficient funds to take their chosen course and that they have an *unconditional* place on that programme. The latter element is provided by the University in the form of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (or CAS) and is issued under our license number as a 'highly trusted sponsor' to students who have accepted an unconditional offer of a place. In issuing the CAS, amongst other things, the University has to confirm the qualifications on which the applicant is being admitted and that they have sufficient English language ability.

- 4.19 Under its highly trusted sponsor license, the University has not only a range of duties in terms of the issuing of the CAS, but a number of responsibilities when the student commences at Sussex, including reporting on anyone who is issued with and uses a Sussex CAS, but who does not subsequently register.

## **ATAS**

- 4.20 The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) was introduced by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 2007 and is/was aimed primarily at postgraduate students, especially research, in certain areas within science, engineering and technology. It aims to stop the spread of knowledge and skills that could be used in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. For 2012, the scheme is being extended to M-level undergraduate programmes within certain JACS codes.

- 4.21 The scheme is mandatory for non-EU/EEA applicants joining programmes within the defined subject areas and the CAS created for their visa application specifies whether ATAS clearance is required. If an applicant who requires clearance does not gain ATAS clearance before applying for their Tier 4 visa, the visa will be automatically refused.

- 4.22 At undergraduate level, ATAS is only required for overseas applicants to the following M-level programmes:

***H330 - MEng Automotive Engineering;***

***H301 - MEng Mechanical Engineering;***

***F303 - MPhys Physics;***

***F302 - MPhys Physics (research placement);***

***F3FM - MPhys Physics with Astrophysics; and***

***F328 - MPhys Theoretical Physics***

Applicants to all other undergraduate programmes are not required to have ATAS clearance.

- 4.23 Overseas applicants for the above degrees will be sent information and advice about ATAS following their offer. The University will be notified of the outcome of the ATAS application and is required to retain a copy of the clearance as part of admitting the student.

- 4.24 Further information about ATAS can be found online at:

[www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/services-we-deliver/atas/)



## CHAPTER 5: WIDENING PARTICIPATION

### POLICY

- 5.1 The University is committed to trying to widen participation from groups of students traditionally under-represented within Higher Education: whether on grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or disability.
- 5.2 As described in 1.11, the University sets out to achieve this aim by involvement in a number of national and local admissions schemes designed to promote Higher Education and to widen access. These currently include SEAS and the work undertaken recently within Aimhigher; building on past schemes like SAIL and TAP. The University also has a strong reputation for working with mature students, especially within the Access community and through our involvement in the Open College Network South East Region, and the University is committed to continuing (and indeed to expanding) its work within this area (see Chapter 6).
- 5.3 The University's current target in this area is to recruit approximately 20% of the annual Home intake from socio-economic groups that are under-represented in HE (i.e. around 500 students within the WP category). The University has made good progress in this area in recent years, but continues to try and improve this.
- 5.4 Some applicants from WP groups, unsurprisingly, present with predicted grades appreciably lower than the standard levels advertised within the prospectus. Admissions Tutors are encouraged to consider carefully the contextual factors and other qualities that may be evident with such applications. For instance, clues about the applicant's performance *in the context of the school's/college's norm* (this is a good indicator of subsequent success in HE); evidence of 'stickability' and generally how well the applicant seems to match the profile of attributes for the chosen subject. Some information on school context can be found in the UCAS reference and the UCAS Weblink record now includes school contextual data via the Education tab on the applicant's overview record (this includes information on free school meals and the percentage of applicants eligible to EMA). Furthermore, information can be found from sources such as published performance tables for schools and colleges available online (see, for example, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/league\\_tables/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/league_tables/default.stm)). If, having been through this process, Admissions Tutors feel that the applicant is suited to the programme and has a good chance of succeeding at Sussex, the official policy is to encourage them to make an offer *at the level of the predicted grades*. The Admissions Office monitors the number of reduced offers being made to applicants.

### FLAGGING WP APPLICANTS

- 5.5 Changes to the UCAS application for 2008 introduced a number of new fields to help universities in identifying applicants who meet certain widening participation indicators.
- 5.6 A question was added to the application asking 'Do any of your parents, step-parents or guardians have any Higher Education qualifications, such as a degree, diploma or certificate of higher education?' Applicants are given four responses (Yes, no, don't know, prefer not to say) and the answer appears in section 2 of the paper copy form. In the case of applicants responding 'no', the Admissions Office will highlight the answer in pink on the copy UCAS form. Admissions Tutors should consider the fact that the student's family has no tradition of Higher Education when reviewing the application. Whilst a 'Yes' (or *blank* or *prefer not to answer*) response to this question will not adversely affect an application; a 'No' answer should be taken into account when reviewing the form. For example, applicants with no family background in HE may not have received the same level of advice as those who had parents at university and there may be less expectation that they will progress to degree studies. If the applicant is 'first generation' then (s)he meets one of our widening participation criteria.

- 5.7 To the left of the Parents' Higher Education box on the UCAS copy form there is a *Time in care* box. Applicants are asked if they have spent any time in local authority care (even if for only one day). This includes if the applicant has been in public care and has lived in one or more foster homes, semi-independent living or residential care. The codes use refer to the following:

A = less than 1 week  
B = 1 week to 3 months  
C = 3 months to 1 year  
D = 1 year to 3 years  
E = 3 years or more

This information has been added to enable universities to contact applicants to discuss any additional needs they may have. The University's widening participation team have developed good practice for the University when dealing with applicants indicating one of the above codes on their UCAS application. A special 'package' has been created by the University which can be offered to care leaving students to help their transition to university life. The 'package' includes, full year housing, an automatic Chancellor's Scholarship, and the allocation of a specific Student Advisor. Following offer, if one of the above codes has been declared by an applicant, a copy of their UCAS form is passed by the Admissions Office to the WP team, who will then write to the applicant to request further information so they can assess whether it is appropriate to offer the 'package'. The applicants are also asked whether they wish the information about them being a care leaving student brought to the attention of their School at Sussex. For admissions purposes, however, it should be noted that children in care have an extremely low participation rate in higher education (see <http://www.buttlettrust.org/>) and therefore the inclusion of a code in answer to this question may be a strong indicator of widening participation.

- 5.8 The Activity 1 and Activity 2 boxes in section 2 of the UCAS copy form enable applicants to flag particular initiatives they have been involved in. Most (*but not all*) of these are part of the widening participation agenda. There are 6 schemes specifically mentioned in the drop down menu of sponsors (plus 'Other' and 'Don't know' categories). The 6 schemes are:

- **AimHigher:** *Originally launched in September 2001, as Excellence Challenge, Aimhigher aimed to widen participation in higher education (HE) by raising the awareness, aspirations and attainment of young people from under-represented groups. The programme particularly focused on young people from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds, some minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. Whilst the funding for Aimhigher ended earlier this year, applicants who were part of the scheme are still expected to apply (and much of the work will hopefully continue in other forms from now on). **Definite WP indicator.***
- **NATGY:** *The original National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) was established by the DfES at Warwick University in 2002 to work with high achieving secondary school students. **Please note that this is not a WP scheme, but aimed at all high achievers.** NAGTY was replaced in Sept 2007 with the Young Gifted & Talented programme (YG&T), which is funded and supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It is dedicated to providing opportunities, within and beyond the classroom, for gifted and talented children and young people aged from 4 to 19. The focus of the programme is to make sure that these learners get every opportunity to recognise, use and develop their gifts and talents, wherever they come from and whatever school or college they are in.*
- **Sutton Trust:** *Founded in 1997, the Trust was set up 'to challenge educational inequality and stop the resulting waste of talent'. They aim to be an*

*'independent voice for children from non-privileged backgrounds, providing expertise on issues of educational access'. **Definite WP indicator.** See <http://www.suttontrust.com/>*

- **LEAPS:** *Established 1995, LEAPS is the Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools. It exists to provide encouragement and support to students attending the 46 state schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians whose ability to progress onto Higher Education may have been adversely affected by social circumstance. LEAPS aims 'to promote social inclusion and equality of opportunity by facilitating increased participation and success in Higher Education of young people (in Edinburgh and the Lothians) whose ability to choose higher education as a post school option and/or to demonstrate or realise their potential may have been inhibited by economic, social or cultural factors.' **LEAPS is a clear WP indicator.** See <http://www.leapsonline.org/>*
- **GOALS:** GOALS (Greater Opportunity of Access and Learning with Schools) is a major widening participation project within the West of Scotland Wider Access Forum. It involves a wide range of people from different backgrounds and provides an exciting range of activities for young people from 300 schools from Annan to Glasgow to Islay. See <http://www.goals.ac.uk/Home.aspx>
- **ASPIRENorth:** *ASPIRENorth is a widening participation initiative working in North East Scotland. The overarching objective of ASPIRENorth is to facilitate young people in making more positive and better informed decisions about their post-school educational choices. See <http://www.scotland-aspirenorth.ac.uk/>*

5.9 In addition to these relatively new fields, there remains some information in the boxes in the top right-hand corner of the Reference providing details on the number of students from the school/college who progress into HE and the Reference or Personal Statement may alert Admissions Tutors to certain WP issues (like carer responsibilities, schools in Education Action Zones, high volumes of free school meals). In addition the following cases will be identified during initial checks (see 3.6):

- SEAS will be stamped in red on the front of application forms from students registered within this initiative and the students themselves will have marked SEAS in box 3(f) on the UCAS form (see paragraphs 5.17 to 5.21);
- Aimhigher Sussex will be stamped on the front of application forms from students who were registered with this initiative and the students themselves will have marked Aimhigher Sussex in box 3(f) on the UCAS form (see 5.22 to 5.26); and

## **OFFER MAKING TO WP APPLICANTS**

5.10 Approaches to WP applicants will have been discussed with Departments as part of the process of establishing the admissions templates. In reviewing applications, the Admissions Co-ordinators will stamp WP on any applications where there is evidence that either the applicant or the School meet WP criteria. This will assist during Confirmation in alerting admissions staff to the need for careful re-consideration should the applicant miss the conditions of their offer. Obviously where applicants meet standard criteria for an offer (as set out in the template) a standard offer will be processed in the normal way. However, where an applicant has lower predictions, any evidence of WP will result in the UCAS application being passed to the Admissions Tutor to consider. Where Admissions Tutors are impressed with such an applicant, they are encouraged to consider a policy of *making a lower offer at the level of the predicted grades*. This sends out a clear 'we want you' message to the applicant and avoids any uncertainty about the amount by which an offer could or should be reduced. Those working within widening participation within link schools and colleges will ensure that those institutions have an understanding of our policy – namely that

standard offers are normal and reduced-grade offers are trying to send a specially-encouraging signal to someone with promise. They will also convey the important message that we depend on a relationship of trust with regard to grade-predictions that must not be abused.

- 5.11 Obviously in cases where the Admissions Tutor is *not* very convinced by the application, then the Admissions Tutor can indicate to the Admissions Office that they wish to make a standard (rather than reduced) offer. And clearly if the predictions are very low then it might be better to reject the applicant outright than to give them false hope with an unachievable offer or set them up to fail by making an offer that is so low that they are likely to struggle with the programme when they join Sussex. Some departments choose to set minimum thresholds for how low they believe it is reasonable to drop.
- 5.12 Where it is decided to make a lower offer, the Admissions Office will flag these on the electronic MAS record to enable the University to keep track of the number of lower-than-standard offers being made. The Office can then monitor the numbers and call a halt if necessary. Whilst it is hoped that lower offers can be made to all those identified, it is possible that some later applicants may not be able to receive reduced-level offers.
- 5.13 Where Admissions Tutors identify potential WP applicants who have not been pre-flagged by the Centre, please alert the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator so that the application can be flagged appropriately. If widening participation is identified by the Admissions Tutor (and they wish to make a reduced offer) this should be indicated to the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator. The Admissions Office will retain a veto on making the offer at the reduced grades if the WP rationale is inadequate (but not a veto on making an offer *per se*, at the standard level). The PVC with responsibility for Admissions would adjudicate any disagreements. Admissions Tutors, however, are encouraged to alert the Admissions Office to *any* WP cases they discover regardless of whether the standard or lower offer is being made, as it is useful to have all WP applicants flagged at Confirmation and helps the Admissions Office to track the progress of WP applicants.
- 5.14 To be absolutely clear: Admissions Tutors are not required to make reduced-grade offers to anyone who comes flagged as WP, but they are being encouraged to make reduced (*ie. predicted-grade*) offers where they judge that the applicant shows 'potential' which has yet to be reflected in their academic performance to date, and suitability for the Sussex programme.

### **'SPECIAL' CIRCUMSTANCES**

- 5.15 'Special' circumstances are different to widening participation in that these can relate to any applicants, irrespective of background. 'Special' circumstances are any (non-WP) situations which may impact on an applicant's performance. Illness (of either the applicant or close family), bereavement, problems with the provision of teaching, difficulties in the exam hall, family problems, or housing difficulties (amongst other things) would all qualify as 'special' circumstances. If Admissions Tutors or Admissions Co-ordinators come across any circumstances mentioned in the application which may have had (or could have) a detrimental impact on examination results these should be highlighted and the UCAS form stamped 'Special'. This information can then be taken into account during confirmation.
- 5.16 With the exception of very severe 'specials' (which might reduce predicted grades) the general policy is **not** to reduce the conditions of offers to these applicants. Instead the normal procedure is to make the standard conditional offer, but to consider the circumstances at confirmation should the applicant miss the conditions of the offer. This is partly because any circumstances mentioned on the UCAS form must have already occurred, which puts them some considerable time before the final exams on which the conditions are based; but also because most notifications of 'special' circumstances relate to the period in the run up to and during the A-level examinations themselves and are therefore *after* any offers have been made. At that point it is difficult to make adjustments to the conditions of offers; plus examination boards (if properly notified) can take these circumstances into accounts.

***The following paragraphs set out the details of specific WP initiatives:***

**SUSSEX EDUCATION ACCESS SCHEME (SEAS)**

- 5.17 SEAS was launched in January 2002 as a replacement for the old SAIL initiative (see 5.29 below). The scheme targets young people who fulfil certain social and educational criteria (for example, no tradition of HE in the family or English as a second language). Pupils can register for the scheme in Years 10, 11 and 12 by completing a form and providing detailed information about themselves and their families. To ensure the scheme reaches the target group we ask teachers to confirm the student details.
- 5.18 Once registered, pupils receive regular correspondence from Student Recruitment Services (SRS) as they progress through school or college. Pupils are given various opportunities to visit Sussex for general open days and subject specific events and residential activities.
- 5.19 The majority of pupils currently registered with SEAS attend schools and colleges in Inner London and the South East. In addition, students who attended the Sussex summer school have been given the opportunity to register.
- 5.20 If a SEAS pupil decides to apply to Sussex they are instructed to enter 'SEAS' in section 3 (f) of the UCAS application and this will trigger the flagging undertaken within the Admissions Office. SEAS registered students have been told that their applications will be given very special consideration by Admissions Tutors, with an expectation that offers will be made in most cases. There isn't a guarantee of an offer, but Admissions Tutors are strongly encouraged to offer and would need to explain fully any decision to reject. Many departmental admissions templates include clear instructions on how to process SEAS applicants without the involvement of the Admissions Tutor. This includes guidance on making reduced offer levels. On the rare occasions that it is deemed necessary to reject a SEAS applicant (normally because the predicted grades are just too low) the Admissions Office will traditionally notify SRS of the decision.
- 5.21 Further information about SEAS and about the students registered in the scheme can be obtained from Donna Watford, Senior Widening Participation Officer in SRS (☎ 2791 or email D.Watford@sussex.ac.uk).

**AIMHIGHER SUSSEX (formerly SUSSEX HIGHWAY)**

- 5.22 As part of the Sussex Liaison and Progression Accord (see Chapter 7), the University was a founding member (along with the University of Brighton and University of Chichester) of the Sussex Highway Project (formerly known as Sussex Coastal Highway). The project addressed the acknowledged problem of significant pockets of coastal deprivation (educational, economic and aspirational) along the South Coast and elsewhere within the region and aimed to work with schools and colleges to widen participation within the local area. The Sussex Highway project then became part of Aimhigher Sussex.
- 5.23 Aimhigher Sussex is/was similar to SEAS in working with younger age groups, registering and monitoring those students as they progress into and through their post-16 education, and then giving very careful consideration to students should they decide to apply to Sussex. Unlike SEAS, however, the scheme was developed in collaboration with the other two local HEIs and worked collaboratively as part of Aimhigher (prior to the end of funding for Aimhigher earlier this year). Although Aimhigher is no longer running, there will still be students/applicants who were part of the scheme and who are now applying to university.
- 5.24 If an Aimhigher Sussex pupil decides to apply to Sussex they will have been instructed to enter 'Aimhigher Sussex' in section 3(f) of the UCAS application and this will trigger the flagging undertaken within the Admissions Office. Like SEAS, Aimhigher Sussex students have been told that their applications will be given very special consideration by Admissions Tutors, with an expectation that offers will be made in most cases. There isn't a guarantee of an offer, but Admissions Tutors are strongly encouraged to offer (and to consider whether a reduced offer is needed). As with SEAS, most departmental admissions templates have clear instructions relating to processing and offer making for Aimhigher Sussex applicants.

5.25 The following are the schools and colleges were part of the scheme:

Bognor Regis Community College	Hillcrest School
Boundstone Community College	Hove Park School
Bourne Community College	King's Manor Community School
Causeway School, The	Longhill School
Comart	Patcham High School
Dorothy Stringer School	Peacehaven Community College
Durrington High School	Portslade Community College
Eastbourne Technology College	Thomas Bennett Community College
Falmer School	Thomas Peacocke Community College
Filsham Valley School	Tideway School
Grove School, The	Westergate Community School
Helenswood School	William Parker Sports School

5.26 Further information about Aimhigher and the students registered in the scheme can be obtained from the Widening Participation team within Student Recruitment Services.

## SUMMER SCHOOLS

5.27 The University also took part in the Aimhigher Summer Schools initiative (formerly part of the Excellence in Cities programme). Under this scheme, selected schools/colleges had the opportunity to send applicants to a summer school. Sussex hosted such events and we have the names/details of those who attended the Sussex Summer Schools.

5.28 The application forms of students who have attended one of these Summer Schools will be stamped 'SUMMER SCHOOL' by the Admissions Office and Admissions Tutors should note this if sent UCAS forms to consider. Admissions Selectors are again asked to give such applicants careful consideration<sup>11</sup>.

## OLDER SCHEMES

5.29 The **Sussex and Inner London (SAIL)** scheme was designed to encourage applications to Sussex from Schools and Colleges in Inner London with lower than average take up rates for HE. It ran for many years up until the late 1990s. SAIL applicants often came from first-generation HE families, ethnic minorities and/or families from the lower socio-economic groups.

5.30 Under the scheme, Schools and Colleges Liaison maintained links with the schools and colleges involved, making visits to talk to the students and trying to arrange appropriate visits to the campus. As part of the scheme, the schools themselves identified applicants to the University who may have experienced particular difficulties or required special consideration. These applicants were flagged to the Selector by the Admissions Office and the Selector was asked to give the UCAS form extra consideration. As part of the scheme, the University **guaranteed to interview** applicants identified by the school and to strongly consider them for **reduced offers** (where appropriate).

5.31 The scheme involved a range of schools and colleges within London:

Acland Burghley  
City and Islington College

---

<sup>11</sup> Please note that some Summer School applicants may also be SEAS applicants.

Forest Hill Boys School  
Gladesmore Community College  
Hackney Community College  
Holland Park School  
Leyton Sixth Form College  
Queens Park Community College  
Sedgehill School  
Sir George Monoux  
Sydenham School  
Tower Hamlets College  
William Ellis School  
William Morris Academy

- 5.32 Whilst many of these schools are now within SEAS, Admissions Tutors and Co-ordinators may wish to note the names of those institutions involved in appreciation of their long links with Sussex.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

- 5.33 For further information about widening participation and the University's various activities, Admissions Tutors should contact Student Recruitment Services and speak with either the Senior Widening Participation Officer, Donna Watford (☎ 2791), or the Schools & Colleges Partnership Co-ordinator, Chris Derbyshire (☎ 8264).

## CHAPTER 6: MATURE STUDENTS

### MATURE STUDENTS

- 6.1 There is no rigid, simple age descriptor to define 'mature student'. In an admissions context the term relates to anyone applying on the strength of experience (either with or without formal academic qualifications) and who has been away from (or has recently returned to) formal education after some time away. Broadly we can split this category of applicant into two sub-groups, to which we have different procedures:
- Unqualified Mature Applicants (see paragraphs 6.2 to 6.7); and
  - Qualified Mature Applicants (i.e. those with recent or past qualifications which meet the University's general entrance requirements, see paragraphs 6.8 onwards).

### UNQUALIFIED MATURE APPLICANTS

- 6.2 Unlike recent school leavers, applicants applying on the strength of wider experience may *not* be expected to meet the University's general (i.e. minimum) entrance requirements (as set out in the Undergraduate Prospectus)<sup>12</sup>. In light of their wider experiences, the University is happy to consider applications from applicants who have been out of formal education for some years and who may not have the formal academic qualifications expected for entry to HE.
- 6.3 Unqualified 'mature' applicants are encouraged to place their applications ahead of the UCAS deadline on 15<sup>th</sup> January and are advised that Admissions Tutors will be looking for strong evidence of interest in, and knowledge of, their desired discipline, as well as evidence (even if not in the traditional sense) of academic ability. Applications from unqualified 'mature' students will normally be flagged to Admissions Tutors and marked up 'UQ' (see 3.6).
- 6.4 If Departments receive applications from unqualified 'mature' students then Admissions Tutors should review the full application (paying careful attention to the Personal Statement and the applicant's work history). If the candidate is not to be immediately rejected then we will ask the applicant to complete the set essay and attend an interview (see 3.43 to 3.51 for more information on interviews)<sup>13</sup>.
- 6.5 **Please note that the unqualified route must involve both essay and interview. The former assesses the applicant's ability to write academically and the latter their ability to discuss this (along with verifying that the applicant actually wrote the essay).**
- 6.6 The applicant will normally be given 5 weeks to complete and submit the essay, which they are told must reach the University at least one week before their allotted interview and which has a maximum length of 1500 words. Copies of the essay and UCAS form will then be passed to the Admissions Tutor in time for consideration ahead of the actual interview. After interview, the Admissions Tutor should indicate in the Decision box whether an offer should be made or whether the candidate should now be rejected (indicating the relevant Reject short code from the list in 3.23). *[Please note that if the applicant is to be rejected then the Admissions Office can write if Admissions Tutors have suggestions for the applicant; e.g. recommend Access course, see 3.28].*
- 6.7 The set essays used for the unqualified route are set by Admissions Tutors at the start of the cycle and should not be varied. Set essays can be used at any stage during the admissions cycle *if* the Admissions Tutor wishes, but selectors need to watch for Reject by Default dates (RBDs) to

---

<sup>12</sup> Recent school leavers who do not meet the general (i.e. minimum) entrance requirements would normally need to be rejected. It may be possible to consider them for foundation years (where these exist), but unqualified school leavers require PVC approval for admission (see 3.57)

<sup>13</sup> At this point the Decision box *must* be left blank.



ensure that there is adequate time for the essay to be written. The Admissions Office will be able to advise on this<sup>14</sup>.

### QUALIFIED APPLICANTS:

- 6.8 Whilst the University does receive a number of applications from unqualified 'mature' students each year, the majority of applications are from people who do meet (or will meet) the University's general entrance requirements. These applicants offer a range of different qualifications, but amongst the most common are those with A-levels (both current and past), OU, professional qualifications, and (most commonly) Access to HE Diplomas (see 6.10 to 6.18 below).
- 6.9 Where applicants have qualifications which meet the standard requirements for the department, these will be handled automatically by the Admissions Co-ordinator in accordance with the departmental admissions template. However, a proportion of applications will inevitably need to be sent to the Admissions Tutor for a decision and the following options would be available:
- Make **offer** immediately (without interview or further information) and invite to Admissions Day (enter 'O' in the Decision box, initial and return to Admissions Office);
  - **Reject** immediately ('R' in the Decision box *and* enter the Reject short code (see 3.23));
  - Ask to provide a **second reference** and/or **examples of work** from their current (or recent) course before making a decision;
  - Invite for **interview** (either with or without seeing work or a second reference);
  - Ask the applicant to complete the **set essay**. Please note that the set essay must **not** normally be used for applicants who are currently studying, but it can be used for applicants who already have their qualifications. If there is some uncertainty about the applicant's suitability for HE (e.g. the qualifications are from some time ago or not in a relevant area or the grades are below the standard offer level) then it is possible to ask them to write the essay. This option may or may not include an **interview** afterwards. Admissions Tutors, however, need to be aware of Reject by Default (RBD) dates to ensure that there is enough time to allow for the essay.

### ACCESS APPLICANTS

- 6.10 Any applicant offering an Access to HE diploma validated by one of the QAA appointed Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) meets the general entrance requirements and should be considered a qualified applicant (see above).
- 6.11 Access courses have for many years provided an alternative entry qualification to A-levels for students returning to education.
- 6.12 Access courses are actually now available to students of all ages (having previously been open to only those aged 19 or over). However, access courses should normally only be an option for students who have not previously studied at Level 3 (ie. A-level standard) or who are returning to education after some time away. However, anyone taking Access will meet the University's general (ie. minimum) entrance requirements in light of their Access to HE diploma (assuming that it is successfully completed).
- 6.13 Most departments have clear procedures for dealing with Access built into their admissions templates. In a number of cases, the Admissions Co-ordinator will undertake standard checks (possibly including obtaining an updated reference) and, assuming all checks are cleared, will move to make a standard offer; for others the Admissions Office will collect examples of work and updated references by a set deadline in February (at which point the Admissions Tutor will reviewed the gathered field of applications in one go).

---

<sup>14</sup> Set essays can also be used for recent school leavers, but would not normally be used with anyone who is currently studying towards a qualification.

- 6.14 Prior to 2010, Access courses were simply awarded on the basis of pass/fail, but in 2010 grading was introduced for the first time. The Access to HE diploma does not have an overall grade; instead each Level 3 unit receives a grade of pass, merit or distinction. The number of units which make up Access is not standard, but the award of an Access to HE diploma depends on the successful completion of at least 60 credits, 45 of which must be at Level 3. Following a review of the 2010 results, the standard Access offer for 2011 entry was set at ***pass the Access to HE diploma with at least 39 Level 3 credits at merit or above, and with at least 21 of these at distinction***. Individual admissions templates may specify which topics/subject areas these distinction grades should be in. At the time of writing, the 2011 Access results have yet to be reviewed so the standard offer for 2012 may be subject to change.
- 6.15 The University is a member of the local Access Validating Agency and OCN, the Open College Network South East Region (OCNSER).
- 6.16 Through the University's membership of OCNSER (and before that OCNHIS, SEOCN and SAFE<sup>15</sup>), Sussex has established very good working relations with many of the local Access providers and has an excellent reputation with local Access students. Prior to the existence of the Sussex Liaison & Progression Accord (see Chapter 7), the University actually had a number of formal agreements with local access providers whereby certain Schools and/or Departments guaranteed interviews or offers to local Access applicants on certain Access programmes. All these arrangements have now been subsumed within the Accord's guarantee to make at least 200 offers to local access applicants (see 7.9). Through the Accord guarantee, the strong relationship with the Access providers in the region remains; as does the University's commitment to Access.

## DIAGNOSTIC TESTS<sup>16</sup>

- 6.17 Any applicants who do *not* meet the language requirements for degrees involving a European language (see paragraphs 3.52 to 3.55), but who appear to have alternative evidence of language ability, can undergo a diagnostic test as part of the selection process to check their language ability.
- 6.18 If a diagnostic test is required then please contact the Admissions Office, who will liaise with the Sussex Centre for Language Studies (SCLS) to discuss if this is appropriate.
- 6.19 The diagnostic test is designed to be part of the selection process (like an interview). **It cannot be part of the conditions of an offer.** If an applicant is being asked to take a diagnostic then no final decision should be indicated in the Decision box on the form until *after* the test has been taken. At that point a report on the result will be passed to the Selector for their final decision.

<sup>15</sup> The Southern Access Federation, which became the South of England Open College Network (SEOCN) and then merged with its neighbouring AVAs to become Open College Network Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Sussex (OCNHIS), before further expansion into the current OCNSER.

<sup>16</sup> Several years ago the University had a multiple choice Maths test, but this has been discontinued. If the entry requirements for a department include GCSE Maths, grade C, then the applicant will need to meet this either via an actual GCSE, CSE or old O-level or by taking a GCSE Maths equivalence alongside an Access course. Where the requirement is Maths, grade B, this can only be met with an actual GCSE or old O-level qualification as the Access Level 2 maths equivalency would only be grade C level.

## CHAPTER 7: PROGRESSION ACCORDS

### INTRODUCTION:

- 7.1 In conjunction with the University of Brighton and the University of Chichester, Sussex is part of two progression accords:
- **Sussex Liaison and Progression Accord (SLPA)**
  - **Sussex Channel Islands Progression Accord (SCIPA)**
- 7.2 Both Accords involve the University in a tripartite agreement between the applicant, the University and the school/college (with responsibilities on all parties). From the University's perspective this involves guaranteed offers in most subjects.
- 7.3 Please note, however, that under both agreements the schools/colleges are told that the guarantees do not extend to applicants applying with relevant criminal convictions (see 8.1) nor to applicants who do not meet any specific entry requirements.

### SUSSEX LIAISON AND PROGRESSION ACCORD (SLPA)

- 7.4 The SLPA links the three universities in the Sussex counties with a range of schools and colleges in East and West Sussex, and Brighton & Hove. The invitation to take part in the Accord was originally open only to state institutions offering post-16 education in the area, but in 2003/4 SLPA was re-launched and expanded to invite all post-16 providers in the two counties to join (including independent schools). A full list of participating institutions can be found on the Progression Accord website ([www.progressionaccord.org.uk](http://www.progressionaccord.org.uk)).
- 7.5 Under the agreement Sussex guarantees to make conditional offers *at the standard offer level* to applicants from Accord schools/colleges who are taking A-levels or BTEC qualifications and who apply by the UCAS deadline. For most degrees, the guarantee also only applies if the applicant is predicted at least BBB at A-level (or equivalent) – see 7.6. Applicants applying through the link scheme flag their applications “ACCORD” or “PROGRESSION ACCORD” in section 3(f) of the UCAS application and the Admissions Office will process these in accordance with the departmental admissions templates. Please note, however, that the guarantee does **not** apply if:
1. the applicant already has their results and they are below the normal, advertised offer level for the chosen degree programme;
  2. the applicant does not meet any specific entrance requirements for the chosen degree; and/or
  3. the applicant applied late (i.e. after 15<sup>th</sup> January).
- 7.6 As most standard offers at Sussex are at least ABB or AAB, and applicants are not normally confirmed below this level at Confirmation, the guarantee offer for many subjects only applies if the applicant is predicted at least BBB. This was introduced to avoid the University setting applicants up to be rejected at confirmation (see 7.7). A full list of which degrees are included within the Accords as guaranteed offers, and which require minimum BBB predictions, is included on the Progression Accord website.
- 7.7 The reason for requiring predictions to be at least BBB before guaranteeing the offer is that previously we have had applicants applying with low predictions, who were made the standard offer, accepted that standard offer as their firm choice and prepared to come to Sussex, only to be rejected in August when their results were published and they fell well below the requirements. The University is therefore concerned about raising the expectations of applicants who we are unlikely to ever actually admit. The proposal (which came from a local college) that we only

guarantee the offer to applicants with predictions close to the relevant offer level is seen as a way to avoid this situation.

- 7.8 For mature applicants offering only two A-levels taken in one year, the University has established agreed alternatives to the standard 3 A-level offers. Any such applications will inevitably be sent over to Admissions Tutors for a decision as the applicant will be presenting with less than the standard array of qualifications.
- 7.9 Applicants offering Access to HE diplomas as their main qualification are outside the **guaranteed offer** scheme, but the University has demonstrated its commitment to Access by guaranteeing to make *at least* 200 offers to access applicants. Accord access applicants will be processed in accordance with departmental admissions templates (see also Chapter 6).
- 7.10 A small number of degrees are outside the SLPA guaranteed offer scheme:

**No Guarantee**

Foundation years in science or engineering

Medicine

MPhys Physics (research placement)

Social Work

### **SUSSEX CHANNEL ISLANDS PROGRESSION ACCORD (SCIPA)**

- 7.11 SCIPA is very similar to SLPA, except that the schools and colleges signed up are in Jersey and Guernsey. The other difference is that as Channel Islands applicants fall outside Home/EU numbers (and therefore the Student Number Control). The programmes outside the guarantee are the same as those shown in 7.10.
- 7.12 As with SLPA, SCIPA applicants identify themselves on the UCAS form using box 3(f), this time by entering "SCIPA" in the space. Again the Admissions Office will process applications in accordance with departmental templates. The guarantee with regards Access is the same as for SLPA, and the Channel Islands access applicants are counted towards the local guarantee of 200 offers.

## SECTION 8: CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

- 8.1 The UCAS application asks applicants if they have a *relevant* criminal conviction. A 'Y' will show in the criminal convictions box in section 2 of the copy form if they answered 'Yes'. The UCAS instructions explain that relevant convictions are offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, convictions for offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking, offences involving fire-arms or arson, or offences listed in the Terrorism Act 2006<sup>17</sup>.
- 8.2 The University has procedures for dealing with applicants who declare a conviction. These procedures also apply to postgraduate applicants and those applying for part-time courses.

### PROCEDURES

- 8.3 When making the initial checks the Admissions Office will highlight anyone answering 'yes' to the convictions question by adding the green criminal convictions sticker (see 3.6).
- 8.4 The application form will be considered in accordance with the departmental admissions template. If an offer is to be made (or an applicant is to be invited to an academic interview), then the applicant will be sent a criminal convictions form asking for information on the nature of the offence *before* we process the offer (or arrange any interview).
- 8.5 Once this information has been received, the application form, criminal convictions form and any supporting correspondence will be considered by the Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions.
- 8.6 This Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) and comprises a member of faculty from the Law department and from the School of Education & Social Work, and the divisional head with responsibility for housing.
- 8.7 The Sub-Committee will consider the information (in line with existing precedent), undertake a risk assessment and decide whether to allow the offer/interview or whether to reject on grounds of the conviction.
- 8.8 Information about the criminal conviction itself will not be kept on the UCAS form. The information, which is provided for admissions purposes, is removed from the UCAS form and kept by the secretary to the Sub-Committee. The UCAS form still indicates that a criminal conviction was considered, but the details are not retained on the form.

### FAILURE OF AN APPLICANT TO RESPOND

- 8.9 If an applicant fails to respond to requests for further information about a declared Criminal Conviction, and also fails to respond to chase letters/emails, then the Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions will consider the case and the application is likely to either be rejected or to be withdrawn under the UCAS procedure for 'withdrawal upon failure to reply to letter'.

### FAILURE OF AN APPLICANT TO DECLARE A CRIMINAL CONVICTION

- 8.10 If an applicant fails to declare a criminal conviction and this is subsequently detected, or an applicant receives a conviction between offer stage and registration at the University, then the application should be referred to the Sub-Committee on Criminal Convictions and reconsidered by the relevant admitting authority in the way described above. The University reserves the right to withdraw any offer after consideration of a subsequent conviction.

---

<sup>17</sup> Applicants for courses in Social Work have different rules and will be required to declare any criminal convictions, including spent sentences and cautions. Due to the fact that the Social Work degrees involve work with children and vulnerable adults, the criminal convictions procedures are more extensive than those described above and are handled within the Department.

## CHAPTER 9: DISABILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS

9.1 On the UCAS application, applicants are asked to declare any special need or disability, which is shown in the box in section 2 on the form. Additional information can then be provided in section 6. Where applicants are declaring a special need, this will have been highlighted in blue by the Admissions Office as part of the initial checks (see 3.6). Occasionally undeclared special needs will also be identified from the Personal Statement or Reference. In these cases, the Admissions Tutor or Co-ordinator should flag the form (see 9.4 and 9.6 below).

9.2 The codes used by applicants in section 2 are:

Code	Definition
A	No disability
B	Social/communication impairment, such as Asperger's syndrome/ other autistic spectrum disorder
C	Blind or have a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
D	Deaf or have a serious hearing impairment
E	Long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
F	Mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder
G	Specific learning disability such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D
H	Physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
I	Disability, impairment or medical condition not listed above
J	Two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions

9.3 The Student Support Unit (SSU) advise that there are no longer any cases of special needs or disability that the University cannot support and therefore feel that no offers should be delayed whilst special needs or disability are being considered. Consequently, applications will be processed using the template, with decisions transmitted to UCAS, before consideration is given to any declared need.

9.4 If an applicant has declared a disability or special need then the Admissions Office will send an 'information' letter to the applicant **after** the offer has been transmitted to UCAS giving details of the support arrangements available at Sussex<sup>18</sup>.

9.5 With the exception of dyslexic students, copies of application forms for all students declaring disabilities or special needs will be sent to the SSU once the 'information' letter has been issued. This will enable the SSU to follow up on cases (if required) and will provide them with the necessary information about the applicant should (s)he contact the SSU direct in response to the 'information' letter sent by the Admissions Office.

9.6 If an Admissions Tutor or Co-ordinator discovers mention of an undeclared special need or disability in the *Reference* (rather than the personal statement) a copy of the UCAS form will be sent to the SSU after offer to see if follow up is needed, but no 'information' letter will be sent to the applicant by the Admissions Office.

9.7 In addition to the 'information' letter sent after offer to applicants declaring a disability, further information about student support facilities will be sent to **all** applicants as part of the offer mailing in the Spring (when housing details are sent out). All applicants who have accepted their offer will again be reminded of student support facilities as part of the summer mailing in July.

<sup>18</sup> The Admissions Office will send a slightly amended 'information' letter should the Admissions Tutor or Co-ordinator discover an 'undeclared' special need or disability in the **Personal Statement** (see also 9.6).

## CHAPTER 10: ADVANCED STANDING AND READMISSION

### INTRODUCTION

- 10.1 The University has a Policy on Admission with Advanced Standing, Accreditation of Prior Learning and Exemptions from Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes, which can be found online at

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/academicoffice/1-3-1-6.html>.

### POLICY:

- 10.2 Applicants should be considered in accordance with the University's policy, which states that for a first degree programme of 360 credits (i.e. current 3 year degree) students must have taken a minimum of 120 credits at Sussex at level 6 or level 5/6 and that for a first degree programme of 480 credits (i.e. current 4 year programme) students must have taken a minimum of 240 credits at Sussex at level 6 or level 5/6. Four year BA/BSc degrees involving a Year Abroad count years 3 & 4 as the final year for the purposes of assessment weights. For this reason a minimum of 240 credits are required to be taken post-registration at Sussex and it is not possible to admit a student to the final year of such programmes with advanced standing including credits for a Year Abroad.
- 10.3 It is, however, permissible to "top-up" from a BSc/BEng to an MPhys/MMath/MChem/MEng by admission with advanced standing provided that:
- a minimum of 120 credits are taken at Sussex (or a college affiliated to the University of Sussex);
  - all the year 3 and year 4 courses specific to the MPhys/MMath/MChem/MEng are taken at Sussex or will have been satisfied by prior learning; and
  - 50% of the assessment for the award is conducted by Sussex
- 10.4 A "top-up" from an Ordinary to an Honours degree is permissible provided that a minimum requirement of 120 credits are taken at Sussex (or a college affiliated to the University in the case of validated programmes).
- 10.5 Whilst the University's formal policy does allow admission into the final year, all Schools at Sussex now adopt an admissions policy of **not** accepting new applicants direct into the **3<sup>rd</sup>/final** year. The prospectus explains that the University does not accept applications to transfer from another university into the final year at Sussex, but will (in most cases) look at 2<sup>nd</sup> year entry.
- 10.6 Individual departmental admissions templates include a section on applications for advanced standing. Most departments will consider applications to transfer into the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, but there are an increasing number who no longer make offers to any applicants for advanced standing (2<sup>nd</sup> or final year). Where we do not consider 2<sup>nd</sup> year entry, the relevant subject entry in the online prospectus explains this.

### ADMISSION INTO YEAR 2:

- 10.7 As explained, departmental admissions templates include sections on advanced standing and the Admissions Office will process applications accordingly, gathering information as required ready to pass to the Admissions Tutor for a decision.
- 10.8 The decision on whether to allow 2<sup>nd</sup> year entry rests the Admissions Tutor. However, **in the unlikely event** that an application for 3<sup>rd</sup> year entry is being considered, any offer would need the approval of the Head of Department, the relevant Examination Board Chair and the Head of School before it could be processed.

- 10.9 Applications being considering for 2<sup>nd</sup> year entry should be reviewed in the same way as 1<sup>st</sup> year entry, except that the Admissions must satisfy her or himself that the applicant will have achieved enough credit for exemption from Year 1 (both in terms of general and specific credit). The Admissions Tutor needs to make clear on the application form whether any offer being made is for 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Where the applicant is still studying their first year at another HEI, and the offer is for 2<sup>nd</sup> year entry, that offer needs to be conditional upon successful completion of that 1<sup>st</sup> year. Care needs to be taken when setting the conditions of any such offer to ensure that it is framed in terms that the applicant will understand (i.e. using the grading/marking scale used at the other HEI) and that the offer is suitably demanding. The standard offer for 2<sup>nd</sup> year entry requires the applicant to achieve 120 credits and to pass the 1<sup>st</sup> year with a weighted average of not less than 60%/2i with no resits.
- 10.10 On the extremely rare occasion that Year 3 entry is being considered the 'Approval for Entry into Year 3' form needs completing and signing by the relevant authorities. This form shows the detail about the courses, results and credit weighting already taken by the applicant prior to admission to Sussex and then sets out the details about the remaining courses (and their relative weighting) to be taken by the applicant whilst at Sussex. It is the Admissions Tutor's responsibility to ensure that the approvals form is completed. A copy of the completed form is sent to the applicant for her/his information with the informal offer letter so that when deciding whether or not to accept our offer the applicant is clear on what is expected from them.
- 10.11 Obviously in all cases of applications for advanced standing, if it is not possible to offer entry into the requested year, the University can always offer a lower point of entry (e.g. offer 1<sup>st</sup> year entry to someone requesting 2<sup>nd</sup> year). Admissions Tutors just need to make this clear on the application form.

#### **APPLICANTS SEEKING RE-ADMISSION**

- 10.12 Applications from students who were previously full-time registered undergraduates at Sussex *may* not need to be admitted through UCAS; some will need instead to be considered as applications for re-admission via the Student Progress & Assessment Office.
- 10.12 Applications from formerly registered students can be divided into three categories:
- **Those who completed and passed at least one year at Sussex**
- 10.13 If the applicant completed at least their first year at Sussex then they need to be re-admitted via the Student Progress & Assessment Office as they already have credit from Sussex. *These students are regarded as applications for re-admission.*
- 10.14 If an applicant who completed at least one year at Sussex in the past has made an application through UCAS, then the Admissions Office will contact the student and explain the procedures for applying for re-admittance. Their UCAS application will be withdrawn.
- **Those who left before the end of their first year**
- 10.15 Applicants who studied at Sussex but who did *not* complete their first year can (and should) be considered through the normal UCAS process. This will mean that they are treated as a *new* applicant, making them eligible for housing and ensuring their involvement in activities such as the Freshers' Week. As these are students who got only part way through their first year of studies at Sussex it has been agreed that they should be treated as *new* students. ***Note: The exception to this would be students still in debt to the University, who would need to be treated as re-admissions unless/until their debt was cleared.***
- **Those who completed a Sussex degree and graduated**
- 10.16 In the case of applicants who have already achieved an undergraduate degree at Sussex and have graduated, the application can be treated in the normal way via UCAS, but Admissions Tutors may wish to request the student's file from the records archive (contact the relevant Admissions Co-ordinator).



- 10.17 Selectors should also pay careful attention to the previous degree programme in case the new degree applied for would involve substantial overlap in the courses available. If necessary, Selectors may wish to consult with Heads of Department or Exam Board Chairs.
- 10.18 It is worth noting that graduates applying to undertake a second undergraduate degree will be ELQ (ie. applying for an equal or lower qualification to one they already hold). It is unlikely that they will have access to funding support (ie. tuition fee or student loans) and will need to fund their tuition fees themselves. As they are ELQ they are outside the student number control (see 3.70).

## CHAPTER 11: OTHER MATTERS

### ADMISSIONS DAYS

- 11.1 Admissions Days provide applicants who have received an offer from Sussex with an opportunity to make a structured visit to the campus. They are distinct from Open Days in that those attending have (generally) received offers; whereas Open Days are normally pre-application events.
- 11.2 Applicants will normally be invited to an Admissions Day following an offer of a place (whether conditional or unconditional) and the invitations will normally be sent out with the 'informal' offer letter. In some cases, Schools/Departments may wish to invite applicants to an Admissions Day before making an offer (e.g. for an interview), but generally the invite goes out with the offer.
- 11.3 Admissions Days are organised by Student Recruitment Services and questions about the arrangements (including dates, room bookings, etc) should be directed to David Winstanley, Daniella Salvage or other members of the SRS team.
- 11.4 It has been agreed that the dates of Admissions Days for each Admissions Cycle should be set at the start of the academic year in order that they can be widely publicised and that applicants can be invited to attend days as soon as offers have been made. In general it is recommended that most Admissions Days take place in the Spring Term and Easter vacation, with the last day, in mid to late April to allow for late offers. It is important to hold enough events to invite all pre-15<sup>th</sup> January applicants receiving offers.
- 11.5 Applicants are able to book their place for their chosen Admissions day online. They are given a choice of dates in order to maximise their chance of being able to visit. Applicants are invited to bring a guest with them and the structure of the day will include sessions for parents and other guests.
- 11.6 The purpose of the Admissions Day is to familiarise the applicant with the degree programme and the department and School to which (s)he has applied, as well as to acquaint her/him with the facilities the University has to offer. A good Admissions Days experience for applicants (and their guests) is vital in producing a strong conversion rate of offers to firm acceptances (the CF rate) and care needs to be taken to ensure a friendly, professional, enjoyable and informative visit.
- 11.7 Once the formal admissions days have finished, late applicants receiving offers will receive information about other ways to visit Sussex (in particular the weekly campus tours). Whilst we cannot offer a full, formal admissions day, it is important that these late applicants are still provided with the opportunity to visit the campus.

### UCAS EXTRA

- 11.8 In 2003 UCAS introduced the **UCAS Extra** process for applicants who are not holding any offers in the latter stages of the cycle (either because they were rejected or because they declined all their offers). It begins in late February and runs until mid-July. The University lists (via the UCAS website) where we have vacancies and applicants apply on-line for any declared vacancies. Applicants can only make one Extra application at a time and we have only a short window in which to respond (currently 21 calendar days) before the applicant is allowed to withdraw the application and place another elsewhere. Obviously the applicant doesn't have to withdraw after the 21 days, but we risk losing the applicant if we do not respond quickly.
- 11.9 If an applicant applies via UCAS Extra, we receive a copy of their UCAS form (printed on pale green) and will process it in accordance with the relevant departmental template. The only difference in the procedure is that, if the Admissions Tutor is required to review the form and make a decision, the Admissions Co-ordinator will ask the Admissions Tutor to come into the Office rather than send the form over to the selector (or will ask them to review the application via Web-link). This is because of the tight time-frame for turning applications around. The decision will be sent, as normal, via UCAS.

- 11.10 The final date when applicants can refer themselves under Extra is 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012 (and the final decisions are due from Universities on 19<sup>th</sup> July). After that applicants will need to wait until Clearing (see 11.14 below).

## CONFIRMATION

- 11.11 Confirmation is the period in which the University receives the results from applicants holding conditional offers, confirms the places of those who have met our requirements and reviews again those with results below the terms of their offer (deciding which to accept and which reject).
- 11.12 The main confirmation process takes place in the middle of August when the A-level results are published (although other results will have been coming in for some months by then). The Admissions Office will match and confirm all those students who have met their grades. Under the direction of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for Admissions, the Academic Registrar and following a meeting with Heads of Schools (or nominees), the Admissions Office will confirm as many students as necessary to reach the undergraduate student number target (in line with VCEG policy and going into Clearing if necessary, see 11.14 below).
- 11.13 The Admissions Office may need to consult with Admissions Tutors at this time and therefore each Admissions Tutor is asked to please ensure that the Undergraduate Admissions Officer has contact details for someone within the Department during this period about admissions matters.

## CLEARING

- 11.14 The Clearing period follows (and overlaps) the Confirmation process. Clearing is the period in which HEIs fill any remaining vacancies. Sussex decides annually what, if any, vacancies to advertise and where (in the national press, via UCAS and/or on the University's own website).
- 11.15 In response to the advertising, applicants will call the University and leave details about their qualifications and experience in the hope of gaining a place. These applications will be considered by the Admissions Office (consulting with Admissions Tutors as necessary) and decisions will be emailed to applicants.
- 11.16 Successful applicants in Clearing will be told to 'refer' themselves to Sussex for the offered degree programme via UCAS Track. Clearing offers are always *informal* until the applicant has 'referred' him/herself and the offer emails make clear that, whilst space is available at the time of emailing, this is not a guarantee of an offer. The applicant's place will only be confirmed once they refer themselves and, even then, only if space remains. Clearing is very much 'first come, first served'.
- 11.17 Decisions about the extent to which the University will enter Clearing (if at all), what grades we will require, and general policy on how to deal with Confirmation are taken by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) on behalf of VCEG and in consultation with the Head of Admissions, Academic Registrar and colleagues in Planning. The meeting with Heads of School during A-level publication week also provides a crucial part in the process.
- 11.18 Further information on Confirmation and Clearing (along with any necessary induction or training) will be provided during the summer period.

## ADJUSTMENT

- 11.19 In 2009 a new 'adjustment' stage was added into the Confirmation and Clearing process as a result of the discussions of the Delivery Partnership.
- 11.20 Under 'adjustment', applicants who have met **and exceeded** the conditions of their firm choice offer have the right to consider changing to another university (assuming they can find a suitable course at another HEI which has vacancies). The scheme allows them to indicate their interest in 'adjusting' via UCAS Track, which opens their application so it is visible to all via Weblink. They can then approach other universities (much like applicants in Clearing), but they do so without giving up their original place. If they find another university with a vacancy in their chosen area, the other university indicates that they wish to accept the 'adjusting' applicant and they will be switched across to the new university by UCAS. If the applicant fails to find a place, or decides not to adjust, they will revert back to their original firm choice.

- 11.21 The period in which an applicant can 'adjust' is tightly controlled. Applicants have a maximum of 5 calendar days to adjust. Their adjustment period starts on A-level publication day or the day when their CF (ie. firm choice) confirms their place to unconditional (whichever is the later).
- 11.22 Adjustment presents an added difficulty during the Confirmation period in terms of monitoring numbers (since confirmed students at Sussex may be seeking adjustment and could leave the University). In the first few years, however, movement via adjustment has been minimal (although this may in part be due to the lack of vacancies at many institutions).

## UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

**Policy on feedback to unsuccessful UCAS applicants,  
complaints and appeals**

The following statement is published on our website (see [www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sas/feedback)):

As explained in our prospectus, entry to Sussex is competitive so regrettably we are unable to offer a place to everyone who applies. Although we do not provide automatic feedback to every unsuccessful applicant, we are happy to provide written feedback upon request. The following information provides details of the University's feedback policy, as well as details about the complaints and appeals procedures for applicants. These policies and procedures would also apply to former students of the University who had been unsuccessful in gaining re-admission (whether to their former programme or to another subject).

**Feedback (defined as a request for information on why an application was turned down)**

- All applications to the University of Sussex are considered fairly, equally and in line with the University's admissions policy.
- The University believes in a holistic approach to selection. In considering applications we therefore take into account all aspects of the application, including qualifications achieved to date, any predicted results on qualifications that are still pending, the Personal Statement, relevant work experience, the academic reference, any mitigating circumstances that we are alerted to (such as long-term illness or personal difficulties) and any contextual data. On occasions, we may also ask for additional information, which might include additional or updated references, further information on qualifications (including transcripts), an additional or enhanced personal statement, examples of work, a set essay and/or an interview. In taking the decision to offer or reject, we are therefore taking into account all the information that has been made available to us. As each application is assessed on its own strengths and merits, the relative weight placed on these different aspects of selection varies from applicant to applicant, and between different degree programmes.
- All decisions (including those to turn down an applicant) are double-checked within the Admissions Office. All decisions are therefore taken by at least two people.
- We do not write automatically to unsuccessful applicants, but communicate the decision via UCAS (*Note: the exception to this are former students seeking re-admission, where the decision will be issued in writing by the Student Progress & Assessment Office direct to the applicant*).
- We are, however, happy to provide written feedback (upon request) to unsuccessful applicants, in accordance with the procedures set out below.
- If applicants have additional information to submit in support of their application, this can be provided as part of the request for feedback.
- Applicants are asked to note that the most common reason for an application to be declined is that the applicant *either* does not meet a specific entry requirement (for example, having A-level standard Maths and Physics for a Physics degree or GCSE level Maths for Psychology) *or* does not have (or is not likely to achieve) the required grades for admission (ie. our standard offer level). Admission to the University of Sussex is competitive and we do not normally take students with grades lower than those advertised in the Undergraduate Prospectus. Unsuccessful applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to check the University's Undergraduate Prospectus for details of both standard offer levels and any specific entry requirements *before* requesting feedback.
- If an applicant wishes to receive feedback then they should put the request in writing and send it to the Undergraduate Admissions Officer at the Admissions Office, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN1 9RH, UK or fax it to +44 (0)1273 678545.

- The request should include the applicant's full name (as declared on the application form), UCAS Personal ID number and degree programme(s) applied for. The letter should state that the applicant is seeking feedback on their rejection and should, ideally, confirm that they have read this policy document. Requests for feedback, setting out the same information, can also be emailed to [ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk).
- Please note that requests for feedback **must** be submitted within the same UCAS admissions cycle as the application about which the feedback is requested.
- When the request for feedback arrives, the applicant will be sent a letter or email acknowledging receipt of the request and giving an indication of the date by which they can expect to receive written feedback. Whilst every effort will be made to respond to requests quickly, at certain times of year this is not possible. We will aim to respond within 28 working days, but the acknowledgment letter will give a better indication of the expected length of time required to reply.
- Feedback, where appropriate, may include advice on possible courses of action. This advice is obviously Sussex specific and it should be noted that any advice is not a guarantee of future admission. Advice on possible courses of action is merely guidance aimed at helping the applicant. Applicants are reminded that independent guidance is also available from advisers within the school, college, careers or Connexions service and applicants should consider consulting these sources for help.
- Requests for feedback should normally come from the applicant. The University will not respond to requests for feedback from those advising applicants (whether parents, guardians, teacher or careers adviser) *unless* that individual/parent has been explicitly appointed (in writing) to act on behalf of the applicant. A copy of the written authority to act for the applicant would need to be provided along with the request for feedback. In the vast majority of cases, however, the University would expect to receive the request for feedback direct from the applicant.
- The University is, however, happy to provide more general feedback on policy to schools, colleges and others providing advice to potential applicants. We regret, however, that we cannot comment on specific individual cases without express permission, in writing, from the applicant.

#### **Appeals (defined as a formal request to review the selection decision)**

- Applicants do *not* have a right of appeal against the *academic judgment* of the University. However, if following receipt of feedback, an applicant feels that an error has occurred, they have the right to request a formal review of the selection decision on one of the following grounds:
  - (1) pertinent information was missing from the original application;
  - (2) there has been a misinterpretation of information or data contained within the original application; and/or
  - (3) there was a procedural anomaly in the handling of the application.
- This review can only be requested after an applicant has received feedback on the reason for their original rejection. The request for a review **must** then be placed (in writing) within **twenty-eight calendar days** of the feedback being sent to the applicant, stating clearly on what grounds the request for a review is being made. This request should be sent to the Head of the Admissions Office, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RH, UK or emailed to [ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk).
- As with the original request for feedback, the subsequent request for a review **must** be made by the applicant and not a third party. The University will not respond to requests from anyone other than the applicant (unless written permission has been granted by the applicant).
- Once received, the Head of the Admissions Office will review the record of the application (normally in consultation with the relevant Admissions Tutor) and will respond in writing. If the original decision is upheld, this correspondence will include the reasons for the decision.

- A separate fee status appeals process exists for applicants who wish to challenge their fee status assessment.

**Complaints (defined as a concern about an aspect of the admissions process, which is not necessarily connected to the selection decision)**

- Complaints are different to requests for feedback or appeals.
- A complaint does not necessarily have to be in connection with a decision to turn down an applicant. A complaint is a concern about a particular procedure, an irregularity in the administration of an application, or a belief that a policy has not been correctly implemented. Complaints may cover any aspect of the admissions process and will normally focus on a specific issue or situation (which could include the feedback request). A complaint does not necessarily question the decision of the University, but raises a concern about how the selection process operated.
- As with requests for feedback and appeals, the complaint must come from the applicant. The complaint must be submitted within **three months** of the conclusion of the admissions process against which the complaint is being made. Complaints must initially be sent (in writing) to the Head of the Admissions Office, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RH, UK or should be emailed to [ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:ug.applicants@sussex.ac.uk). The Head of the Admissions Office will seek to resolve the complaint or explain the situation and will respond in writing to the applicant.
- If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint from the Head of the Admissions Office, the complaint can be passed to the Academic Registrar for a final review. This escalation of the complaint must be submitted in writing within **twenty-eight calendar days** of receiving the response from the Head of the Admissions Office. The complaint should be sent to the Academic Registrar, Sussex House, University of Sussex, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RH.
- The Academic Registrar will review the case on the following grounds:
  - (1) whether there were procedural irregularities in the investigation of the complaint; or
  - (2) whether fresh evidence can be presented which was not or could not reasonably have been made available to the Head of the Admissions Office; or
  - (3) whether the finding of the previous investigation was against the weight of the evidence.
- The Academic Registrar will notify the applicant of the outcome of the complaint in writing. The Academic Registrar's decision is final.

## UKBA and English Language Requirements

### 1. Background

UKBA now require applicants for degree level study (and higher) to have a minimum English language level of B2 (ie. equivalent to IELTS 5.5) in each of the four components of language learning (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

The exceptions to this are:

- students moving from Tier 4 (Child) into Tier 4 (General) who have completed a course of study of at least six months duration (e.g. international students who have studied A-levels at a school in the UK and then progress to university here);
- those who have completed a qualification equivalent to a UK degree which was taught in a majority English-speaking country (including degrees taught in the UK)<sup>19</sup>;
- those who are nationals of majority English-speaking countries (as defined in UKBA's list, see 2 below).

For degree level study and higher, universities are allowed to choose their own method of assessing the English language competence at B2 and this paper sets out those qualifications which Sussex would define as meeting the B2 English language requirement in addition to the UKBA exceptions listed above.

### 2. UKBA defined majority English-speaking countries:

The countries whose nationals UKBA would automatically exempt from the B2 English language requirement are:

- Antigua and Barbuda;
- Australia;
- The Bahamas;
- Barbados;
- Belize;
- Canada;
- Dominica;
- Grenada;
- Guyana;
- Jamaica;
- New Zealand;
- St Kitts and Nevis;
- St Lucia;
- St Vincent and the Grenadines;
- Trinidad and Tobago; and
- USA

### 3. Sussex exemptions by country:

In addition to the list above, Sussex would define nationals from the following countries as exempt from English language requirements (for the reasons shown):

---

<sup>19</sup> Where the applicant has studied a degree in Canada, the University would recognise this as evidence of English language ability only where we can confirm the applicant had been taught and assessed entirely in English.



<b>Country</b>	<b>Reason for exempting from English</b>	<b>English language qualification equivalent to GCSE English, A*-C</b>
Botswana	From late primary onwards, English is the medium of instruction.	Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education Examination, grades A - C
Fiji	English is the medium of instruction; although at primary level the native languages may be used	Fiji School Leaving Certificate, grades A and B (65% and above)
Gambia, The	English is used as the language of instruction in most schools and at post-secondary and tertiary levels.	West African Senior School Certificate, grades A1 - C6
Ghana	English is the main medium of instruction in secondary and higher education.	Senior Secondary School Certificate
Kenya	Language of instruction is generally English; although at primary level pupils also learn in their own mother tongue.	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, grades A - C
Lesotho	Sesotho is used during first four years of primary, but afterwards English is the medium of instruction.	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC), grades 1 - 6
Liberia	English is the medium of instruction from primary level onwards.	Senior School Certificate, grades 1 - 6
Malawi	Chichewa and English are used in primary, but English is the medium of instruction in all secondary and tertiary education.	Malawi School Certificate of Education, grades 1 - 6
Nigeria	After first three years of primary, English is the medium of instruction throughout the educational system.	West African Senior School Certificate, grades 1 - 6
Papua New Guinea	English is the medium of instruction at all levels	Higher School Certificate
Sierra Leone	English is the medium of instruction	West African Senior School Certificate, grades A1 - C6
Swaziland	English is generally the medium of instruction	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC), grades 1 - 6
Tanzania	English is the official language of instruction at secondary and higher level.	Certificate of Secondary Education/Secondary School Leaving Certificate, grades A - C
Uganda	English is the official language.	Uganda Certificate of Education, grades 1 - 6
Zambia	English is the official medium of instruction. However, the first six (of seven) years of primary education is taught in the local language	School Certificate/General Certificate of Education, grades 1 - 6
Zimbabwe	The language of instruction is generally English; although up to grade 3 in primary may be taught in other languages.	Zimbabwe General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level, grades A - C

#### **4. Sussex potential exemptions by country:**

Applicants from the following countries *may* be exempt from English language requirements as English is one of the official languages of instruction. However, it will be necessary to check that English was the medium of instruction for individual applicants (and/or that the applicant has achieved the GCSE equivalence shown). If the applicant meets this then they would be exempt from further evidence of English language:

Country	Reason for exempting from English	English language qualification equivalent to GCSE English, A*-C
Cameroon	Two systems of education in Cameroon: one based on the British system (in the south-west and north-west provinces) and another on the French system (in the former French provinces)	General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level, grades A - C
Namibia	English is the official language of instruction, so applicants should meet English requirements. However, only a small percentage of population speak English as their first language so some care needs to ensure English is sufficient.	Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) at Ordinary Level, grades A – C (Note: Namibia has also introduced the IGCSE)
South Africa	Any of the 11 official languages are used for the first three grades of education, but grades 4 to 12 are in English or Afrikaans.	Senior Certificate, grades A - C

### 5. Sussex exemptions based on other qualifications:

UKBA recognise a range of Secure English Language Tests (SELTs), such as IELTS, TOEFL, Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE) and Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) and have set minimum levels required from each of these. These have been taken into account to redefine the University's own IELTS and TOEFL requirements (see Appendix).

However, the following are additional sources of evidence of English language ability that Sussex would accept as providing proof of at least B2 English language ability, but which are not included in UKBA's list of SELTs:

- GCSE or IGCSE English as a first language, grade C;
- GCSE or IGCSE English as a second language, grade B;
- GCE AS or A level English, grade C;
- GCE A levels, where the subjects used to achieve our standard offer level include humanities and/or social sciences (ie. essay-based disciplines);
- International Baccalaureate Diploma, where applicant is taking English A1 or A2, or those with English B at grade 5 or better (Higher or Standard level);
- Paper-based TOEFL with scores of at least 550, with 4 in TWE;
- Singapore/Cambridge GCE O level in English, grades 1 - 6;
- Brunei/Cambridge GCE O level in English, grades 1 - 6;
- Hong Kong AS or A level in Use of English, grade C;
- Indian Standard XII English from the CISCE Board with at least 80%;
- Ontario Secondary School Diploma, English at Grade 12U level, grade B or British Columbia Senior Secondary Graduation Diploma, with Grade 12 English at grade B;
- English 1119 (grades 1 to 6) within the Malaysian Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), which is awarded by UCLES; and
- Scores of 500+ in *both* the Writing & Critical Reading papers of the American SAT I combined with American High School diploma with a good GPA and/or APs.

Sussex also recognises the English language results from within a number of international foundation years and pre-masters programmes awarded or validated by other UK universities and accepts their assessment of English language as meeting the B2 requirement. These include:

- SGI International Foundation Year, International Year 1 Diploma and Pre-Masters programme at the International Study Centre at the University of Sussex, as well as comparable programmes at other UK International Study Centres based at other UK universities;

- INTO foundation years and diploma offered at the Universities of Exeter, East Anglia, Glasgow Caledonian, Newcastle, and Manchester;
- Kaplan's Foundation Certificate at Sheffield International College (linked to the University of Sheffield);
- King's College London, International Foundation programme;
- NCUK International Foundation Year for undergraduates and NCUK Graduate Diploma and Pre-Masters for relevant postgraduate taught programmes;
- Queen Mary, University of London, International Foundation;
- SOAS Intermediate Certificate;
- University of Warwick Higher Education Foundation Programme (HEFP); and
- Bellerby's Diploma programme.

In addition, for undergraduate applicants transferring to Sussex from a bachelors degree at another UK HEI, we would accept successful completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> year at that other UK university (achieving 120 credits at stage 1) as evidence of English ability as well as meeting our academic requirement.

Rob Evans  
22 June 2011

g:\admissions\robertev\international\english language exemptions for pbs.docx