Admissions Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy covers entry to University of Essex Online (UoEO) courses delivered by Kaplan Open Learning. It covers all stages of an applicant’s interaction with the UoEO from initial enquiry through application and receipt of the selection decision.

We are committed to fair access and encourage applications from all students who are able to demonstrate the potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course.

Principles Governing Admissions

We believe that a diverse community forms an essential part of our core values and that diversity amongst our student body enriches learning, teaching and the overall student experience.

Our courses combine the advantages of a traditional classroom environment with the flexibility of distance learning. They are part-time and delivered entirely online and thus ideally suited to the needs of working adults and those who cannot or do not want to study full-time at a traditional campus based university.

This policy sets out the means by which we encourage and welcome applicants from different backgrounds. We are committed to ensuring that every student who has the potential to succeed on our programmes has the opportunity to apply. All applicants will be considered and evaluated on the basis of their past achievements and academic potential. Our admissions policies and procedures are designed to ensure that all applicants are considered fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards. We acknowledge the principles governing good admissions practice set out in Section B2 of the Quality Assurance Agency Code of Practice¹.

We also strive to observe the good practice guidance provided by SPA² and to comply with all relevant legislation in relation to admissions activity.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality to ensure that admission to our courses is determined only by personal merit. Our Equal Opportunities Policy sets out how we safeguard the equality for our students and our staff.

Monitoring and review of the Admissions Policy is undertaken annually by the Academic Board.


² Supporting Professionalism in Admissions http://www.spa.ac.uk
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Entry Requirements

We have flexible entry requirements that look at both academic and work-based experience and offer the following entry routes on to our programmes:

1. **Academic Entry Route**

   In order to satisfy the Academic Entry Route requirements for our programmes, applicants must have the academic qualifications detailed for each programme on our website ([http://online.essex.ac.uk/](http://online.essex.ac.uk/)) and be able to provide evidence of their academic achievement at the point of application.

2. **Open Entry Route**

   We recognise that candidates can gain skills in a wide variety of ways and that prior academic performance is not the only indicator of an applicant's ability. Therefore, if applicants do not meet the minimum Academic Entry Route requirements, they may still be eligible to enrol via our Open Entry Route.

   Applications will be considered on an individual basis taking into account the applicant's motivation for doing the course, prior work experience and any other relevant professional qualifications that demonstrate their ability to successfully complete the programme.

   Students granted admission via the open entry route will be allowed to start the course and make an assessment of whether it is right for them during the first three weeks. All applicants granted admission via this route must pass their first assignment set during this time in order to continue with their studies.

   Admissions decisions are made by our academic team who assess the quality of evidence supplied by applicants and who make an academic and holistic judgment on a candidate's suitability and potential to succeed.

3. **Direct Entry to Progression Routes**

   Applicants who have completed relevant qualifications at Level 5 are able to apply for direct entry onto our Level 6 progression route courses leading to a full Bachelors’ degree.

4. **Professional Exemptions**

   Applicants who have a professional qualification in a relevant subject may be able to apply for up to 60 credits of module exemptions on the postgraduate MBA programme.

5. **English Language Competence**

   Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not been educated in an English-speaking environment (country and/or institution) are required to achieve a minimum overall score of IELTS (Academic) 6.0 or equivalent (undergraduate) or 6.5 or equivalent (postgraduate) or equivalent to be admitted to our programmes. A range of English language qualifications are accepted as being equivalent to IELTS.
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We also utilise the Kaplan International Test of English (KITE) as an additional assessment tool. KITE is adaptive based on the answers provided. Used in conjunction with the written assessment within the first three weeks and the admissions interviews we believe this provides a robust assessment of a student’s potential to succeed.

21 Day Money Back Guarantee

We recognise that starting, or returning to higher education, especially online study can be daunting and challenging, therefore we offer a 21 day trial period. Within the trial period students are able to participate in an online discussion and are required to submit a written assignment. The assignment is reviewed by the academic team to help identify students who may not be able to progress onto the full programme or who may need additional support at the start of their studies. Additionally, students may decide that this mode of study is not right for them and may withdraw within the 21 days. Students who decide not to continue, or who do not pass the written assignment will receive a full refund.

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)

Applicants who believe they may be eligible for APCL will be given the opportunity to have their prior learning assessed and accredited towards a relevant course. Application for APCL should be made before the applicant commences study on the course into which s/he is seeking to transfer prior learning. Please refer to our Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning Policy for further details.

The Admissions Process

Each applicant will be allocated a dedicated Admissions Adviser who will be the principal contact, guide applicants through the full process and communicate the final selection decision to them.

6. Selection

All applications are subject to an initial check by the Admissions Adviser. The check will ensure that all relevant information and documentation has been provided. On completion of the initial checks, the Admissions Adviser will pass the application to the Academic team who will make the selection decision. In accordance with our commitment to fair admissions, each application is considered individually by an appropriate member of the Academic Team, who will determine whether an offer should be made on the basis of academic achievements to date, or other evidence of the applicant’s ability and potential to complete the course for which he/she has applied.

7. Offer-Making

Where we decide to make an offer, this will be communicated to the student directly by the Admissions Adviser. The Admissions Adviser will also explain any conditions that may be attached to the offer, and arrange a pre-enrolment call with the applicant to provide advice and guidance in relation to the course. During the pre-
enrolment call the Admissions Adviser will also gather further information from the applicant as prescribed the Department for Education (Dfe), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the University.

7. Unsuccessful applicants

Where we decide that an offer cannot be made, the Admissions Adviser will contact the applicant explaining the reasons for the decision. Where possible, the Admissions Adviser will offer guidance as to what alternative qualifications or experience an applicant would need to gain in order to pursue their chosen path of study.

8. Re-admission of withdrawn students

Students who previously left a course voluntarily or who were required to withdraw without obtaining an award and now wish to reapply will be considered in accordance with our Re-Admissions Policy.

9. Discontinuation or suspension of courses

We reserve the right to discontinue or suspend a course for which offers have already been issued, but undertake to do this in exceptional circumstances only. Where a course is discontinued, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible, and where possible and appropriate, are offered a place on an alternative course offered by us.

Consideration of Additional Data in Selection and Offer-Making

10. Applicants with disabilities

Applicants who declare a disability will be provided with advice and guidance on the level of support that we can provide and on any funding that may be available to applicants.

Responsibility of applicants in the application process

Applicants are expected to:

- Provide full, accurate and honest information with respect to their application;
- Communicate any changes to the information originally supplied in their application as soon as possible;
- Respond in a timely manner to requests for further information from us.

Any application found to contain false or misleading information will be rejected and no further applications from these candidates will be considered.

We reserve the right to withdraw or amend any offer in light of additional information which may come to light after the original decision has been made.
Complaints

Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their application, we encourage them to let us know as soon as possible to allow us to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

A complaint does not necessarily have to be regarding an unsuccessful application but may be in connection with any aspect of the admissions process or any belief that a procedure has not been properly followed.

It is possible that we may not be able to resolve the matter informally, and in these cases the applicant may initiate a formal complaint. Further details of how to raise a formal complaint can be found in the Complaints Policy.

Data Protection and Communication with Third Parties

We aim to operate in compliance with data protection legislation and good records management practice. Applicants’ data is treated as confidential by all staff involved in the admissions process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. Data may be shared with our University partners, Government agencies and, if appropriate, our recruitment agents. In accordance with University policy, staff involved in the admissions process communicate only with applicants themselves, unless the applicant has given express permission for a third party to communicate on his/her behalf. Third parties may be parents, teachers, advisers or agents acting on behalf of applicants.

Registration and Induction

We provide an academic and pastoral induction period to support the transition of applicants to registered students at the end of the admissions process. The Head of Student Support will allocate a dedicated Student Adviser who will be the main point of contact throughout their studies with us.

The Student Adviser will conduct an initial Welcome Call to introduce themselves and explain the induction process which includes a Welcome Week designed to introduce students to the learning platform and online resources that will be available to them. This will normally also include information on general study skills, access to online libraries and good academic practice, such as effective referencing and advice on how to avoid plagiarism.