University of Essex

Online

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 the QAA Advice and Guidance on Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access[1].

We also strive to observe the good practice guidance provided by UCAS[2] where it is applicable to part-time online distance learning provision 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 Equality and Diversity Policy sets out how we safeguard the equality for our students and our staff.

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

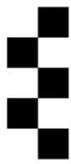## Marketing and Student Recruitment

We are committed to the provision of comprehensive, open and consistent messages in our marketing and recruitment information, and to the management of activity which leads to the admission of students in ways that are fair, clear and explicit and implemented consistently.

Our marketing and recruitment messages are delivered through promotional materials and activities which we aim to ensure are accurate, relevant, current, and accessible in order to provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.

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[1] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access

[2] https://www.ucas.com/providers/good-practice

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We ensure that our marketing and recruitment communications with applicants adheres to Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) legislation.

Entry Requirements

We have flexible entry requirements that look at both academic and work-based experience. The specific entry requirements for each individual programme are outlined in the 'Entry requirements' section on the relevant programme information page on our website (online.essex.ac.uk).

We offer the following entry routes:

1. Academic Entry Route

In order to satisfy the Academic Entry Route requirements for our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, applicants must meet the academic qualification criteria detailed in the 'Entry requirements' section on our website and be able to provide evidence of their academic achievement at the point of application.

2. Work Experience 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 Academic Entry Route requirements, they may still be eligible to enrol via the Work Experience Route.

In order to satisfy the Work Experience Entry Route requirements for our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, applicants must meet the criteria detailed in the 'Entry requirements' section on our website and be able to provide evidence of their academic achievement and work experience at the point of application.

3. Open Entry Route

This entry route only applies to Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) programmes at undergraduate level. We believe that education should be accessible to everyone, so applicants do not need any previous academic qualifications or work experience to apply for a CertHE programme.

English Language Competence

Applicants whose first 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) to be admitted to our programmes. A range of English language qualifications are accepted as being equivalent to IELTS.

If applicants do not hold an IELTS or equivalent qualification, we require them to complete the Kaplan International Test of English (KITE). KITE is online assessment which is adaptive based on the answers provided. Students must score a minimum of B2 for undergraduate and C1 for postgraduate courses prior to being offered a place on one of our programmes.

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 money back guarantee period. Within this period all students will be required to participate in a range of activities which will allow them to experience online study and will also allow our academic team to assess a
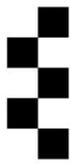
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student's potential to succeed on their chosen programme. Engagement in the activities will also help the academic team to determine if any additional support may be required when a student commences their studies.

Students who do not actively engage with the required activities and pass any required assessments will not be permitted to proceed on the programme and will be offered one further attempt. The student will be provided with advice and guidance about how to address any issues to improve their potential for success at the next attempt.

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 are not permitted to proceed on the programme will receive a full refund within 14 working days.

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning and Professional Exemptions

Applicants who believe they may be eligible for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) or professional exemptions will be given the opportunity to have this assessed and accredited towards a relevant programme:

- Applicants who have completed modules at Levels 4 and 5 are able to apply for APCL for relevant individual modules.

- Applicants who have completed relevant qualifications equivalent to 240 credits (120 credits at Levels 4 and 120 credits at level 5) are able to apply for direct entry onto our Level 6 top-up programmes leading to a full Bachelors' degree.

- Applicants who have a professional qualification in a relevant subject are able to apply for up to 60 credits of module exemptions on our Masters programmes (excluding MBA).

All applications are considered on a case by case basis and should be made before the applicant commences study on the programme into which they are wanting to enrol onto. 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 their principal contact and will guide them through the admissions process:

1. Quality evaluation

All applications are subject to a quality evaluation by an Admissions Adviser. This ensures that the application form has been fully completed and that the following information and documentation has been provided as a minimum:

- Copy of an official form of photo ID
- CV
- Personal Statement (minimum 300 words)

On completion of this evaluation, the application is classed as a 'Qualified Application'.

The following additional evidence may also be requested to support the application:

- Copies of prior educational certificates
- Reference(s)
- IELTs or equivalent English language certificate
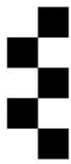
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2. Approval

In accordance with our commitment to fair admissions, each 'Qualified Application' is considered individually. Offers will 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.

3. Successful applicants

Where we decide to make an offer, this will be communicated to the student directly by their allocated 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.

4. 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.

5. 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-admission Policy.

6. 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 will be informed as soon as possible, and where possible and appropriate, will be offered a place on an alternative programme delivered by us.

7. Applicants with disabilities

The University of Essex Online is dedicated to providing all our applicants with an equal opportunity to engage, learn, and succeed on their chosen course. In order to provide the most appropriate support, it is important that we are made aware of any disability or condition an applicant has – whether the applicant believes it may affect their studies or not. Although, it is the right of the applicant not to disclose a disability if they do not wish to.

Applicants who declare a disability will be provided with advice and guidance on the level of support that we can provide prior to them enrolling to enable them to make an informed decision about joining the programme. We can also provide information on any funding that may be available.

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.
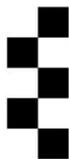
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Complaints

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 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 partner, 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 Services will allocate a dedicated Student Adviser to each enrolled student who will be the main point of contact, wherever possible, throughout their studies with us.

The Student Adviser will conduct an initial Welcome Call to introduce themselves and explain the induction process which may include 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.

Responsible Manager(s)	Head of Admissions Managing Director
Related Policies and Procedures	Accredited Prior Certificated Learning Policy Re-admission Policy Disability Disclosure and Reasonable Adjustment Policy Widening Participation Statement Equality and Diversity Policy Complaints Policy Terms and Conditions