Undergraduate admissions statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the University's admissions principles and procedures.

Year of admissions cycle: 2014

Courses covered:

BSc Computer Science (G400)
MEng Computer Science with Study in Continental Europe (G401)
MEng Computer Science (G403)
MEng Mathematics and Computer Science (GG1K)
BSc Mathematics and Computer Science (GG14)

Admissions process

1. Admissions team
Applications assessed by centralised team in close co-operation with Admissions Tutor/s.

2. Application assessment methods

All applications must be submitted through UCAS; we cannot consider any direct applications.

All applications are considered on an equal basis. Applications are not segregated by the type of educational institution attended. All applications are acknowledged by email on receipt (starting in mid-September), to establish contact and inform the applicant of the process to be followed.

All applications are allocated scores on the academic record and the personal statement / reference.

The weighting is as follows:

Academic: 100%

Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or age.

3. Interview or visit day
Applicants who are considered for an offer are invited to attend one of the Departmental Visit Days, normally from November to March. The visit is to allow students to find out more about our course content and the University. Applicants to whom offers are to be made are informed following attendance at an Admissions Visit Day. Details of offers are confirmed through UCAS. Unsuccessful applicants are also informed through UCAS.

Although there are other opportunities to visit the department, such as University Open Days, if an applicant is invited to attend an Admissions Visit Day then they are expected to attend even if they have attended one of these other University events. This is because the Admissions Visit Day is specifically tailored to prospective students, as well as giving the admissions team an opportunity to clarify issues that may not be clear from the application forms and to help decide on the details of any offer that may be made. Allowance is made however for an applicant that cannot make an Admissions Day due to any exceptional circumstance, if this is the case then the applicant should inform the Admissions Team as soon as possible.

4. Correspondence with applicants

All correspondence relating to an application's status will be sent by email.

All applicants should be contacted when we receive their application, to establish contact and inform the applicant of the process to be followed. Applicants will then be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful, or to inform them that their application has been assessed but that we will not be able to make a final decision until later in the cycle.

Applicants living in the UK will be invited to a visit day. Having attended a visit day an applicant may then receive an offer if their application is successful. Details of offers are confirmed through UCAS. Unsuccessful applicants are also informed through UCAS.

5. Deferred applications

We will consider applications for deferred entry.

Criteria for assessing applicants

1. Academic entry requirements

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Bacc, 14-19 Diploma, GCSEs) can be found in the online Undergraduate Prospectus. Other qualifications, including international qualifications, will be considered on their individual merits; further information is available at: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international/study-at-bristol/how-to-apply/country-specific/ .

Assessment of applicants is based on the following criteria:

1. achieved or predicted grades in acceptable qualifications
2. additional contextual information

2. Additional academic criteria

Applicants are expected to demonstrate high academic ability, normally equivalent to A*AA at A level. Allowance is made for:

- applicants who have extenuating circumstances
- applicants who have relevant additional skills, knowledge or experience
- mature applicants with relevant work experience and/or a University Access qualification

- applicants from a school or college whose published academic performance indicators are below the national average

For those taking A-Levels, Mathematics A-Level is required for all of our degree programmes. For those students studying other qualifications, mathematics will also be required.

Those A-Level students interested in applying for the Mathematics and Computer Science degree programmes should note that Further Mathematics, STEP or AEA Mathematics are highly desirable, but not required, alongside Mathematics A-Level. We know that Further Maths is not available to students in all schools and colleges, or that it is often taught in a restricted amount of time. We would urge prospective applicants to study Further Mathematics to the highest level available to them. If Further Maths AS or A level, or STEP and AEA mathematics are not available in your school or college, or if it they are taught in a restricted manner (for example in less time than is normally allocated to an A level subject), please make this clear in your application.

Those who are applying to study in Continental Europe are usually expected to achieve a GCSE grade A/A* (or equivalent) in the appropriate language, or have substantial other language experience.

A-Level subjects General studies or Critical Thinking are not counted as part of offers, nor is it considered in the academic assessment of applicants.

A-Level Computer Science, Computing or ICT are not required for any of our courses. For students looking for a good grounding in the principles of Computing pre A-level, we do recommend the new GCSE in Computing. Again, however, this is not a requirement for admission to any of our degrees.

Applicants for whom English is not their first language are expected to demonstrate that their command of English is of a sufficiently high standard, normally equivalent to that required to satisfy the University's English language criterion. See 9. below

AS results: We are aware that many institutions do not certify their AS results as a matter of policy. Students will not be penalised for not quoting their AS grades. However we would definitely encourage applicants to tell us about any particularly strong performances in modules in Mathematics or any closely related subject.

3. Personal statement criteria
We will check the personal statement and reference for evidence of mitigating circumstances. In some cases we may need to refer to the personal statement and reference to differentiate between applicants with very similar academic profiles. If this is the case, then the criteria will include the following:

- Evidence of Further Math / Additional academic preparation and achievements
- Competitions, other Mathematical or Computer Science related activity

- Personal factors such as relevant work experience, being given a level of responsibility (i.e. mentoring, Head Girl or Boy etc).
- Overall well written English, expression and construction of the personal statement.

Overall, it should demonstrate a genuine interest in the chosen course and basic knowledge of the subject, highlighting their skills in mathematics and problem solving. It should also give evidence of strong study skills, responsibility, leadership and team working, commitment and achievement, both in academic and extra-curricular activities. Any relevant work experience or a Year in Industry placement should be highlighted along with any relevant reading/research beyond the A-Level course syllabus. We are also interested in evidence of organisation, self-motivation, and the ability to balance different activities.

4. Reference criteria

An applicant's reference should ideally be from a school or college, from a personal tutor confirming the academic potential of the applicant to study at degree level. It should also give evidence of the commitment of the applicant to academic study and contributions to school life. Assessors will want to consider the accuracy and consistency of the predicted grades in the light of previous GCSE and AS level achievement (or reasons why this is not the case), evidence of effort and a positive attitude towards studies, and if there are any educational or special circumstances.

Where this is not possible, a non-academic reference should confirm the relevant experience of the applicant and give evidence of responsibility and commitment as well as mathematical and problem solving capabilities. It should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

5. Additional Tests

The department does not require candidates in the UK to undertake tests or written assessment apart from in the following exceptional circumstance. When a candidate has been invited for a formal interview as described above they may also be asked to complete a short test of a mathematical nature.

6. Interview

The department does not interview applicants in the UK apart from in the following exceptional circumstances:

- to clarify issues that may not be clear from the application form;
- mature students whose qualifications provide a poor guide to academic ability;
- overseas students whose qualifications are not fully understood by admissions staff;
- applications to enter the school in the second year of a degree having successfully completed the first year of a degree at another UK university

The interview panel will consist of two or three members. At least one of the interviewers will be trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques and all interviews are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities. In the course of such interviews, applicants may be asked to complete short test questions of a mathematical nature.

7. Mature applicants

We welcome applications from mature students. Where applicants may not have the educational qualifications to support their application, industrial and self-taught experience will be taken into consideration. Where possible please highlight proven strengths in both Computer Science and Mathematics in your personal statement. We will invite strong candidates to interview where you may be asked to also sit a test of a mathematical nature.

8. International applicants

International applicants will be subject to the criteria as detailed here: www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries

We also consider applications through the Common Application system, and the same criteria and assessment used for UCAS applicants are applied.

9. English Language requirements for non-native speakers

All applicants are required to demonstrate that they have sufficient ability to understand and express themselves in both spoken and written English in order to benefit fully from their degree course.

English Language requirements can be found in the Undergraduate Prospectus and at: www.bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements

The specific IELTS standard required for this programme can be found in our online prospectus:

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/prospectus/undergraduate/2014/sections/COSC/dept_intro

10. Contextual information

We take a holistic approach to all applications, ensuring that the educational and social context in which an applicant applies is taken into consideration, where supported by clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic achievement. This may include time spent in Local Authority care, information about which is provided in the UCAS application. Such applications will have one grade lifted for their academic score: e.g. an AAB applicant will be awarded the same academic score as an AAA applicant. Applicants still need to satisfy specific subject requirements.

We also consider evidence of clear motivation to study. This may include attendance at a University summer school, a targeted Access Scheme (such as Access to Bristol or Realising Opportunities), or participation in other higher education outreach activities.

We do not take the following into consideration when making admissions decisions: the school type attended by an applicant, or whether an applicant's parent has any experience of higher education.

Offers

Typical offers for A-levels and other UK qualifications can be found in the entry data in the online Undergraduate Prospectus. Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will be made equivalent to the published A-level offer.

We may make lower offers based on whether an applicant is deemed to have experienced educational disadvantage, as defined in section 7.5 of the University's admissions principles and procedures.

Other

1. Transfers

Applicants may transfer between Computer Science G400 and G403 till the end of the second year as the curriculum for both these degree programs are the same for the first two years.

2. Additional information

Cross-dept/joint course admissions arrangements:

Maths and Computer Science combined programmes are led by the Computer Science department, therefore all arrangements from that Department apply.

Electronics and Computer Science combined programmes are led by the Electrical Engineering department, therefore all arrangements from that Department apply.   The Electrical Engineering Department Admissions Statement can be found here:
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/eeng/prospective/undergraduate/ug-das.pdf

Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Undergraduate Admissions Office: eng-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 928 8150.