

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:

Single honours
BA Music (W300)

Joint honours
BA Music & French (WR31)
BA Music & German (WR32)
BA Music & Italian (WR33)

Admissions process

1. Admissions team

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

2. Application assessment methods

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. Applications that are received on time (in accordance with the deadlines of the UCAS application cycle) are guaranteed equal consideration.

All applications are allocated scores based on their academic record (achieved and/or predicted), weighting GCSEs as 20% and A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) as 80%. Where the personal statement and reference are also scored, the weighting for this is as follows:

- Academic score: 50% (15% GCSE, 35% A-levels)
- Personal statement and reference (combined): 50%

The procedure for admissions to the joint honours Music & Modern Languages degree is the same as single honours Music, with consideration being given independently by members of the admissions team. Applicants for these programmes are advised to also read the Admissions Statement for Modern Languages.

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 have received an offer will normally be invited to a Visit Day in the spring. This provides the opportunity to see the city and the university, and to ask questions about the teaching programmes, the year abroad and other aspects of student life in Bristol. While attendance at a Visit Day is strongly encouraged, it is not obligatory and plays no role in the selection process; it is also recognised that not all applicants will be able to attend.

We will only call applicants to interview if necessary to complete their assessment (eg. if a mature applicant offers non-standard qualifications that make it difficult to assess their appropriateness for our programme of study). Interviews are not part of the typical admissions process for Music.

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 who receive an offer will receive an invitation to a visit day.

5. Deferred applications

We will consider applications for deferred entry. However, deferred applicants should be aware that, in fairness to other applicants in the following cycle, we can only make a limited number of deferred offers in each cycle.

Applicants for deferred entry are assessed in the same way as applications for entry in the current cycle. However, the selectors would expect to see an indication in the personal statement of how the gap year will be spent, and the reasons for deferring should be relevant to the applicant's proposed university course, career plans or specific personal needs (eg. to earn money to finance university study; to receive medical treatment; to study/work in relevant countries).

Criteria for assessing applicants

1. Academic entry requirements

The academic entry requirements for each individual programme can be found in our online prospectus: www.bris.ac.uk/prospectus/undergraduate/2014

We would consider applicants with alternative equivalent qualifications to those listed in our online prospectus. Further information on other qualifications, including international qualifications, is available at: www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries

Joint honours applicants for WR31 Music & French are required have grade B (achieved or predicted) in A-level French, or an equivalent qualification. Applicants for WR32 Music & German and WR33 Music & Italian would need to demonstrate language-learning ability,

usually through a modern language A-level grade B or equivalent qualification, but these languages may be studied at *ab initio* level.

A-level General Studies and Critical Thinking are not considered towards offers or academic assessment.

2. Additional academic criteria

Applicants are expected to have A-level Music (predicted or achieved) or an equivalent qualification. If an applicant has been unable to study A-level Music (or equivalent), we would consider Grade 8 in Music Theory at Merit or Distinction as a suitable alternative qualification.

Applicants are normally expected to have achieved or be working towards an Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) Grade 8 or Trinity Grade 8 examination on their principal instrument, voice or in Music Theory on admission. While occasional exceptions may be made, applicants studying A-level Music (or equivalent) as well as Grade 8 are more likely to be offered a place. Please state these Music qualifications clearly in the Qualifications section on the UCAS application form.

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.

We consider the personal statement with regard to what it can tell us about an applicant's experience with and interest in different aspects of music and in studying music in a broad intellectual context, about performance skills and experience, teamwork skills, and aspirations for the further development of musical abilities and knowledge.

The statement should communicate clearly the range of an applicant's musical experiences and interests, and should show awareness of the nature of the applied for BA programme and its suitability to the musical and professional aspirations, and any plans an applicant has.

From applicants for any the Joint Honours programmes (WR31, WR32, WR33), in addition to the aspects mentioned with regard to music, we are looking for an interest in and commitment to the subject, possibly demonstrated by time spent in one or more countries where the language to be studied is spoken, knowledge and appreciation of the linguistic culture and evidence of critical thinking and analytical skills.

4. Reference criteria

In assessing the school reference, we are looking for:

- independent confirmation of qualities described in the personal statement (especially motivation, commitment, ability to deal with change and challenges, teamwork)
- up-to-date and detailed reports on progress in the subjects being studied as a back-up to the grades predicted
- comments on the extent and quality of any contribution made to the musical and general life of the school (and beyond)

5. Additional Tests

Not applicable.

6. Interview

Interviews or auditions do not typically form part of the selection process for Music. However, applicants whose UCAS forms leave some doubt about the extent to which their particular qualifications prepare them adequately for the BA programmes may be invited to an interview at a Visit Day. Students are always interviewed by two members of staff, including a member of staff with training in fair and effective recruitment techniques, and all interviews are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

At the interview, we seek to discover evidence of a knowledge of the repertoire being studied by the applicant within their particular musical education; the extent of historical, technical and practical content within that syllabus; ways in which the applicant would wish to develop musically through three years of intensive musical study at university (and ways in which our particular course would suit those aspirations). We may ask to see samples of recent essay or compositional work if the information provided on the UCAS form is not sufficient to enable a decision to be made. We do not normally require applicants to perform on their instrument or voice in these interviews, nor are they required to sit any formal entrance examination, though applicants may be asked to comment on short unseen musical extracts; the precise nature of the interview depends on varying circumstances and particular concerns raised in the UCAS form. An interview is also an opportunity for applicants to ask questions of us.

7. Mature applicants

Mature applicants applying before five years have elapsed since taking A levels (or equivalent) will normally be treated as above. Where more than five years have elapsed, mature applicants will normally be expected to have successfully completed an Access course or equivalent and/ or employment history may in some instances be taken into account.

We will invite selected applicants to interview or to complete a short piece of written work in order to assess their academic potential and ascertain their level of commitment to the academic study of the subject(s). A decision will be made after the interview. These interviews typically take place in the new year of the application cycle.

Interviewers will be looking for evidence of a suitable level of understanding and comprehension in relation to Music; evidence of commitment and motivation; evidence of engagement and relevant experience; evidence of appropriate skills and abilities.

All interviews are conducted by two people, including a member of staff with training in fair and effective recruitment techniques, and are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

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:

www.bristol.ac.uk/prospectus/undergraduate/2014/sections/MUSI/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 seeking entry into year 2 of any of the BA programmes offered by the School of Music should normally have passed the first year of an equivalent BA programme at another university at 2:1 standard (or, if they are applying during this first year, would receive an offer conditional on passing the year to 2:1 standard). These applicants should also be aware that direct entry into year 2 of these programmes is subject to the admissions tutors' discretion and the availability of places in that year group; if we make an offer to an applicant, it may be for first year entry only.

In the case of applicants who have studied on a programme with a substantially different focus than the Bristol BA (e.g. a performance-centred programme at a conservatoire), we would need detailed information about units/modules studied, and may invite the applicant for an interview, before we can make a decision.

2. Additional information

Not applicable.

Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Undergraduate Admissions Office: arts-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 928 8147.