

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 Honours in Physics (F300)
MSci Honours in Physics (F303)
MSci Honours in Physics with Study in Continental Europe (F304)
MSci Honours in Physics with Industrial Experience (F305)
BSc Honours in Physics with Astrophysics (F3F5)
MSci Honours in Physics with Astrophysics (F3FM)
BSc Joint Honours in Physics and Philosophy (FV35)
MSci Joint Honours in Physics and Philosophy (FVH5)
BSc Physics with a Preliminary Year of Study (F308)
BSc Mathematics and Physics (GFD3)
MSci Mathematics and Physics (GFC3)

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.

All applications must be submitted through UCAS; we cannot consider any direct applications. All applications that are received on time (in accordance with the deadlines of the UCAS application cycle) are guaranteed equal consideration.

When assessing an application the Admissions Team will consider the following;

- A candidate's academic potential, and their potential to succeed on our programme.
- The personal statement
- The reference
- Exceptional circumstances and/or the educational and social context in which an applicant applies, where there is clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic achievement.

All applications are allocated scores on the academic record.

The weighting is as follows:

A-Level score: 80%

GCSE score: 20%

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their UCAS application only; we cannot take into account any additional information received from an applicant or institution, unless we have requested it.

All applications for joint honours courses are also assessed in relation to the other subject's selection criteria, so the other relevant Admissions Statement should also be consulted.

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

3. Interview or visit day

Selected applicants who are considered for an offer will be invited to a pre-offer visit day, before a decision is made. The visit is to allow students to find out more about our course content and the University. Candidates to whom offers are to be made are informed following attendance at a visit day. Details of offers are confirmed through UCAS. Unsuccessful candidates are also informed through UCAS.

Although there are other opportunities to visit the department, such as University Open Days, if a candidate is invited to attend a visit day then they are expected to attend even if they have attended one of these other University events. This is because the 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 a candidate that cannot make a visit 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.

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.

Criteria for assessing applicants

1. Academic entry requirements

The academic entry requirements for each individual programme can be found in our online prospectus: <http://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: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries/>

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

2. Additional academic criteria

Academic attainment in Mathematics and Physics are most important for a Physics degree, and assessment under this heading also takes account of both the appropriateness of the additional subject(s) offered and the grades predicted or obtained. We would expect to see high grades in Science and Mathematics subjects as well as English at GCSE level.

We welcome applications from candidates with International Baccalaureate or other equivalent qualifications; in these cases we expect Mathematics and Physics to be studied at higher level.

In assessing the strength of an applicant's academic record, we follow the general guidelines set out in the University's Widening Participation policy as outlined in the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures.

We recognise that academic performance should be judged in the context of the overall levels of achievement in the candidate's school or college, as described in section 7.4 of the Admissions Principles and Procedures.

Account is also taken of medical evidence and any other mitigating factors that may have affected examination performance, or constraints that have limited the choice of A level programmes.

We consider grades of examinations previously taken, including the top 8 GCSE, Standards etc.

Please note- cross school/joint honours course may have different subject and/or grade requirements that must be met. Prospective applicants are therefore advised to look carefully at the information provided in the online Undergraduate Prospectus, for requirements specific to your intended course of study.

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:

The Admissions team looks for evidence in the personal statement that applicants are well informed, and appreciate the importance of Mathematics in a Physics degree and explain why they want to pursue a degree in Physics.

Statements about other achievements, specific interests and aspirations will be considered in relation to availability of opportunities to the applicant.

We will also take note of any other information that candidates consider to be relevant and wish to present in this section of the UCAS form.

Please note – cross school/joint honours programmes may have additional criteria specific to the partner school. Prospective applicants are therefore strongly advised to refer to the Admissions Statements provided by partner Schools for the intended course of study.

4. Reference criteria

The reports provided by schools and colleges provide valuable information from those who have worked closely with the applicant in an academic setting. We look for strong, though not necessarily unqualified support from referees, together with an assessment of mathematical ability and of potential for further study.

Information about the candidate's particular achievements, and challenges faced, are also taken into account when evaluating information about actual or predicted examination performance.

Please note – cross school/joint honours programmes may have additional criteria specific to the partner school. Prospective applicants are therefore strongly advised to refer to the Admissions Statements provided by partner Schools for the intended course of study.

5. Additional Tests

Not applicable.

6. Interview

In rare cases where we cannot reach a decision based on the information in the UCAS form, candidates may be called for interview.

We also welcome applications to the Physics with a Preliminary Year programme (F308) from such applicants who have not had the opportunity to gain mathematical skills as yet. Applicants in these categories who we believe have the potential to succeed on our courses may be interviewed by two members of the academic staff (at least one of whom will be an admissions tutor). Although interviews include some standard questions to facilitate comparison, the procedure is designed to provide an opportunity for each applicant to discuss their individual experience and qualifications.

The School does not have any specific admissions targets for non-standard applicants, all decisions are made on merit, with offers made to those students we feel would most benefit from our degree programmes.

7. Mature applicants

Non-standard applicants (eg those not taking A-levels or examinations with an accepted standard of equivalence), whose UCAS forms suggest they have the potential to succeed on one of our programmes are considered on an individual basis. We welcome applications from mature students taking an Access course, or who may be taking a limited range of A-levels, although clear mathematical knowledge and ability need to be demonstrated.

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/PHYS/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

Transfers between BSc and MSci courses are possible up to the end of year 2. Transfers between other single or joint honours courses are usually possible, but remain at the discretion of the department(s).

We will, occasionally, accept suitably qualified students who wish to transfer from another institution directly into year 2.

2. Additional information

Not applicable.

Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Undergraduate Admissions Office: sci-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 3317203.