

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 Religion and Theology (V600)

Joint Honours (offered in conjunction with other Schools)

- BA Theology and Sociology (VL63)
- BA Philosophy and Theology (VV56)

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.

Occasionally, the Admissions Office may seek further information from an applicant or their referee when there is an apparent mistake on or omission from the UCAS application that prejudices their application.

All applications are allocated scores based on their academic record (achieved and/or predicted), weighting GCSEs as 30% and A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) as 70%. Where the personal statement and reference are also scored, the weighting for this is as follows:

- Academic score: 80% (10% GCSE, 70% A-levels)
- Personal statement and reference (combined): 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.

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. This provides the opportunity to see the city and the university, and to ask questions about the teaching programmes 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.

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 are expected to describe briefly in their personal statement how their "gap" year might subsequently benefit their university career. Preference may be given to those with a clear and relevant academic purpose or with significant health or personal issues.

We urge applicants to submit applications in the current admissions cycle wherever possible, especially for small Joint Honours courses e.g. Philosophy and Theology.

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

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

2. Additional academic criteria

Individual applicants are normally expected to have actual or predicted A-level grades (or equivalent) at the required level or above. Although that level may fluctuate from year to year, no particular A-level (or equivalent) subject areas are required for any programme. Applicants applying for the Joint honours Philosophy and Theology are expected to have at least Grade C or above in GSCE Maths.

Please note – cross school/joint honours programmes may have additional/different requirements specific to the particular course of study. Prospective applicants are therefore strongly advised to refer to the Admissions Statements provided by partner Schools for their 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 School expects the personal statement on UCAS forms to be written in good English. And applicants should be able to show in general terms that they can think clearly and understand complex ideas.

More particularly, the personal statement should also demonstrate a genuine academic interest in the specific Single Honours subject area or Joint Honours subject areas for which application is being made.

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 reference will be included in the assessment of the Personal Statement, with the following taken into account:

- Applicant's motivation
- Applicant's ability to work independently
- Applicant's powers of analysis and expression
- Ways in which the applicant's performance does not reflect their ability, e.g. educational/special circumstances

We are aware that some applicants (for instance, mature students) may well have referees with less experience of the UCAS system. Whilst all candidates should try to ensure they have a reliable and informed referee, the School will endeavour to ensure that a poorly written reference does not significantly disadvantage an applicant.

5. Additional Tests

Not applicable.

6. Interview

Applicants are not interviewed, aside from mature applicants applying after five years or more have elapsed since taking A-levels or equivalent. These interviews typically take place in the New Year.

All interviews are conducted by two members of staff, at least one of whom is trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques. All interviews are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the applicant currently has the necessary skills and capabilities to pursue a degree programme in Theology and Religious Studies and whether the course is appropriate to the applicant's interests and aspirations.

There is no testing of the applicant's subject-specific knowledge but s/he will be given the opportunity to discuss and debate relevant interests.

The principal assessment criteria are an applicant's interest in and commitment to the subject, his/her capacity for clear thinking and oral expression, for the critical analysis of arguments and evidence, and for working independently at degree level.

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 qualifications and/ or employment history may in some instances be taken into account.

We will invite selected applicants to interview in order to assess their academic potential and ascertain their level of commitment to the academic study. A decision will be made after the interview.

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/THRS/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

Incoming students will normally be expected to enter at the start of the next first year. Requests for transfers to our courses may be made from suitable applicants from other degree programmes within the University at the end of Year One.

Where applicants have already successfully completed at another institution the equivalent of the first-year programme being applied for, they may be able to enter directly into Year 2.

Direct entry into Year 3 is not possible.

Acceptance is at the discretion of the Department and is subject to there being space available on the degree programme to which the applicant is applying. Applications are to be submitted through UCAS, indicating in the appropriate field ('Point of Entry') the applicant's intention to be admitted into Year Two.

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.