

Undergraduate admissions statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#).

Year of admissions cycle: 2015

Courses covered:

Single Honours:

BSc Geology (F600)

MSci Geology (F603)

MSci Geology with Study Abroad (F609)

BSc Environmental Geoscience (F640)

MSci Environmental Geoscience (F641)

MSci Environmental Geoscience with Study Abroad (F644)

Joint Honours:

BSc Geology and Biology (FC61)

MSci Palaeontology and Evolution (CF16)

Admissions process

1. Admissions team

Applications are assessed by a 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 that are received on time (in accordance with UCAS deadlines) are guaranteed equal consideration.

All applications are allocated scores based on their academic record, which forms 100 per cent of our assessment. The weighting is as follows:

- A-level (or equivalent): 80%
- GCSEs : 20%

Decisions to make offers are based on the application, and offers are made to those who have chosen the most appropriate A-level subjects and who show potential, appear to be well-motivated and are likely to achieve the standard offer.

On receipt of applications, those with high grades or predictions may be made immediate offers, whereas those with lower grades may have their application held for consideration later in the cycle.

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

We do not consider any direct applications to the University.

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

Applicants are invited to visit days as offers are made to them. All who have applied within the standard time frame are able to arrange an alternative day if that offered is not convenient.

Visit days provide applicants with the chance to explore the academic opportunities offered by the School of Earth Sciences, to attend a sample lecture and tutorial and be shown around the facilities. There are opportunities to meet and question a variety of staff and current students and to visit a residence. Applicants who live abroad or a great distance from Bristol are not expected to attend an open day, though they are welcome to attend if they wish.

4. Correspondence with applicants

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

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.

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 (ie 2016). 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

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Baccalaureate, GCSEs) can be found in the [undergraduate course finder](#). Other qualifications, including international qualifications, will be considered on their individual merits; [further information](#) is available.

2. Additional academic criteria

The weightings we use to rank A-level (or equivalent) subjects are

- Weighting 1.0:
Ancient History; Biology; Botany; Chemistry; English Language; English Literature; Environmental Studies/Science; Further Maths; Geography; Geology; Greek; History; Human Biology; Latin; Marine Science; Maths; Modern Languages; Physics; Psychology; Science; Statistics; Zoology
- Weighting 0.6:
All other subjects (except General Studies and Critical Thinking which are zero)

Applicants with the subject combinations listed below will be at a disadvantage:

- Environmental Studies and Biology
- Marine Science and Biology

These combinations can only be considered with a physical science as a third subject.

A-levels in General Studies and Critical Thinking are not included in our assessment of applicants or in the terms of offers.

3. Personal statement criteria

In some cases we may 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:

- Interest in and commitment to Earth Sciences;
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding;
- Problem-solving, analytical and practical skills;
- Non-academic achievement/experience, extra-curricular activities, positions of responsibility;
- Relevant work experience;
- Written English, expression, construction, argument.

4. Reference criteria

References should ideally be from a school or college, from a personal tutor confirming the academic potential of the applicant to study at degree level. Assessors will want to consider the accuracy and consistency of the predicted grades in the light of previous achievement, evidence of effort and a positive attitude towards studies. Where this is not possible, a non-academic reference should confirm the relevant experience of the applicant. It should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

Referees should note that the reference will be used as a basis for the assessment of academic performance and as support for the personal statement. 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, motivation, suitability for university education, and any educational or exceptional circumstances.

5. Additional tests

There are not usually any additional tests for applicants; however, some mature applicants may sit a show test if invited to interview (see **7. Mature applicants** below).

6. Interview

Interviews will be reserved for cases where the application relies on non-standard academic qualifications. Interviews will be conducted by two members of the school admissions team who will have undergone appropriate University training in fair and effective recruitment techniques. All interviews are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

7. Mature applicants

Mature applicants, and others who have come through a non-standard route, are required to attend a visit day and a competitive interview. The aim of the interview is to discern the applicant's knowledge level and ability to apply that knowledge to answer relevant questions. Such applicants tend to be invited later in the admissions cycle to enable them to gain the maximum benefit possible from their studies, e.g. Access to Science course, prior to assessment.

If A-levels or equivalent are not offered, applicants may be required to sit a test involving basic science and quantitative skills. The purpose of the test is to ensure that applicants have enough knowledge and understanding of physical science to enable them to start a degree from a knowledge base comparable to that of their peers.

Mature applicants may be admitted with slightly lower grades than the standard offer, particularly if they have had a relevant employment history.

8. International applicants

International applicants will be subject to the criteria as detailed here:

www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries

We also consider applications for these courses through the Common Application system, and the same criteria and assessment used for UCAS applicants are applied. Applicants can only be considered through one application route; we cannot consider applicants through the Common Application who have also applied to Bristol and/or other institutions through UCAS.

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 for each course can be found in the [undergraduate course finder](#) and are explained at www.bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

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 can be provided in the application.

As part of our commitment to the UK national agenda on widening participation, we consider the educational context in which grades have been achieved, particularly if there is evidence that an applicant's current school or college performs below a defined threshold.

When assessing whether applicants meet our academic requirements, contextual criteria may be applied to those who attend and apply from a school or college which in the previous year ranked in the bottom 40 per cent in any of the following categories:

- average score per A-level entry;
- average score per A-level entrant;
- percentage of students applying to higher education.

If an applicant meets one of these criteria, we will raise their predicted/achieved grades by one grade in our rankings; ie an AAB applicant will be awarded the same academic score as an AAA applicant. Applicants still need to satisfy specific subject requirements. Contextual offers are usually one grade lower than the standard offer.

The University reviews its definition of educational disadvantage and low-performing schools each year and each case is considered on an individual basis.

We also consider evidence of clear motivation to study. This may include participation in higher education outreach activities, attendance at a University summer school or a targeted Access Scheme (such as Access to Bristol or Realising Opportunities where applicants receive special consideration and in some cases, guaranteed and/or lower offers; please see the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#) for more information). We do not take the following into consideration when making admissions decisions: the school type attended by an applicant (e.g. independent school, state school, academy), 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 course finder](#). Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will be made equivalent to the published A-level offer.

We recognise that some applicants may achieve higher than their predicted grades, and so we may also consider applicants who are predicted to achieve one grade below the entry

requirements (as long as this is in a non-specified subject). Any offer made would be at the standard level.

We may make lower 'contextual' 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](#) (see also **Criteria for assessing applicants: 10. Contextual information** above).

Other

1. Transfers

The standard offer for all our Earth Science courses are the same, and so applicants may change their Single Honours course of study (within this group) at any time prior to registration.

Single Honours students have a common first year of study and so may change degree prior to the start of their second year, subject to relevant academic criteria being met.

For Joint Honours degrees, transfer may be possible but will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Occasional transfers from other universities are possible as long as the material studied in a first year elsewhere is comparable to that studied by our first years. Each case is treated individually.

2. Additional information

Applicants to all of our degree courses must enjoy being outdoors, whatever the weather, as fieldwork is an important method of study and learning.

The University can only guarantee places if the exact terms of the offer are met, however offer holders may not automatically be rejected if the terms of the offer are missed narrowly. If offer holders do not meet the terms of their offer when exam results are released they may be considered as a 'near miss candidate'. All near miss candidates are reviewed mid-August after those who have met the terms of their offer have been confirmed. International offer holders may be reconsidered earlier depending when their exam results are released.

Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Undergraduate Admissions Office: sci-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 928 8153.