

## 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:

BSc Geography (F800)  
MSci Geography (F803)  
BSc Geography with Quantitative Methods (F802)  
MSci Geography with Quantitative Methods (F804)  
BSc Geography with Study Abroad (09F4)  
BSc Geography with Study in Continental Europe (F801)

## 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 and personal statement/reference. The weighting is as follows:

- A-level (or equivalent): 70%
- GCSEs: 10%
- Personal statement and reference: 20%.

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their UCAS application form only; we cannot 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.

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 degree course(s) 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 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. Those applying for deferred entry will be expected to justify this in their statement.

## **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**

Candidates without Geography or a close equivalent at this level would be expected to explain this absence in their application and/or interview.

For our BSc degree with Study in Continental Europe, applicants are expected to have a good pass in the relevant language (German, Spanish or French) at GCSE level or higher. For students with no demonstrated ability in the relevant language, evidence of a high standard of learning in another non-native language must be presented. These criteria may be waived if, for example, the applicant is a native speaker of the relevant language.

We rank applicants according to predicted/actual grades, subjects offered, personal statements and school references. We expect to recruit equivalent numbers to human, physical and mixed geography pathways. To achieve this, we set different thresholds for

groups of applications presenting with different subject combinations. We emphasise that the breadth of material covered in Geography across the humanities and sciences is wide.

To assist in balancing the streams, we use the following subject weightings:

- 1.0:  
Biology; Chemistry; Computer Science, Computing, Economics; English Literature; Geography; Geology; Government and Politics; History; Information Technology; Latin; Marine Science; Maths or Further Maths; Philosophy; Physics; Statistics
- 0.8:  
All other subjects (except General Studies and Critical Thinking which are excluded).

Additionally, to achieve equivalent numbers in these pathways we will make a lower offer to applicants presenting with three of the science related subjects as listed below:

Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Computing, Design and Technology – Product Design, Environmental Studies, Further Maths, Geography, Geology, Human Biology, Information Technology, Marine Science, Maths, Physics, Statistics.

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

### **3. Personal statement criteria**

The personal statement is vital for providing clear indications of the applicant's suitability for the course. We look for a clear and convincing enthusiasm for geography as a focus for academic study, consistent with the nature of the courses provided at Bristol.

This should be reinforced by evidence of initiative in extending this interest beyond formal classroom provision. Applicants should also address the benefits they see from further study at the tertiary level and suggest what they can offer to an intensive and high quality teaching and learning environment, both academically and otherwise, as well as what they hope to gain from it. The statement should be well written in terms of its structure and power of expression.

### **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.

We look for strong support from school/college or other referees, with explanations of any apparent inconsistencies in an applicant's performance and predictions. The reference will often include evidence of the applicant's potential for further academic study, independent and original thought and unsupervised learning across the curriculum, particularly in geography.

### **5. Additional tests**

Not applicable.

## **6. Interview**

Interviews will be reserved for cases where documented evidence needs further clarification or the application relies on non-standard academic qualifications. Interviews will be conducted by two members of academic staff outside the school admissions team, who will have undergone appropriate University training in fair and effective recruitment.

Interviews will most likely be scheduled to occur on one of the school visit days and applicants will be able to take part in at least some of the guided programme.

## **7. Mature applicants**

Applications from mature applicants or those with atypical educational backgrounds will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **8. International applicants**

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

[www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries](http://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](http://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).

If you are not qualified or have an unsuitable academic background for the course to which you originally applied, we may offer you the opportunity to be considered for an alternative course in a related subject area. In such cases applicants will receive an email notification providing a list of the alternative options. Please note that receipt of this email does not guarantee that an offer will be made.

## Other

### 1. Transfers

Transfers into the first year are considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account any grades achieved by the student during their university studies, the subjects studied, space on the course and any other information pertinent to the case. Transfers into the second year are not accepted unless there are exceptional extenuating circumstances.

## **2. Additional information**

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](mailto:sci-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk) or +44 (0)117 928 8153.