

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:

BA Liberal Arts (2ZB7)

MLibArts Liberal Arts with Study Abroad (2T23)

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 the personal statement/reference. The weightings for our assessment are as follows:

- Academic score: 30%;
- Personal Statement/Reference score: 70%.

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their 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

All applicants who receive an offer will normally be invited to a visit day in the course of the academic year. This gives them a chance to see the city and the University, to ask questions about the course and other aspects of student life in Bristol, and to meet informally with existing staff and students.

While attendance at a visit day is strongly recommended, 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.

International applicants are in most cases treated in the same way as home applicants, except that we recognise that attendance at interview (see **Criteria for assessing applicants: 6. Interview** below) or a visit day may not be practical.

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

Deferred entry applications (ie for 2016) are considered, but applicants are expected to explain their reasons for requesting deferred entry and to describe briefly in their personal statement how their 'gap' year might subsequently benefit their university career.

Only a very limited number of deferred offers may be made to ensure fairness to those applying in the next admissions cycle. Preference may be given to those with a clear and relevant academic purpose or with significant health or personal issues.

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

We take an applicant's record at GCSE into account, but there are no specific requirements, except GCSE English Language and Mathematics and we recognise that an applicant's academic abilities may improve significantly subsequent to GCSE. Credit is given to the top eight grades achieved, including the required subjects.

All Liberal Arts students pursue a subject pathway as part of their degree (minimum one-quarter of the credit points) and individual subjects may have additional specific criteria. These include an A-level (or equivalent) in:

- English Literature or combined English Literature and Language, for English pathway;
- Music, for Music pathway;
- French, for French pathway;
- an ancient or modern language, for pathways in other languages.

All applicants are expected to have studied two subjects taught by the University's Faculty of Arts to A-level standard. Please visit the [Faculty of Arts](#) website for a full list of subjects taught.

3. Personal statement criteria

The personal statement is vital for providing clear indications of the applicant's suitability for the course. We are looking for evidence of:

- interest in and commitment to subjects taught in the Faculty of Arts;
- interest in links between these subjects and overarching themes of historical or contemporary relevance;
- relevant reading or research beyond the A-level syllabus;
- clear thinking and understanding, problem solving and analytical skills, and creativity;
- grammatically correct, clearly structured, and stylishly written English;
- self-motivation and management;
- responses to opportunities and challenges faced.

All Liberal Arts students pursue a subject pathway as part of their degree (minimum one-quarter of the credit points) and individual subjects may have additional specific criteria. Prospective applicants are therefore strongly advised to refer to the admissions statements provided for the individual subjects they wish to pursue.

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 would look for evidence of the following within the reference:

- Applicant's motivation;
- Applicant's ability to work independently;
- Applicant's powers of analysis and expression.

5. Additional tests

Not applicable.

6. Interview

Interviews are not usually part of our selection process. However, we may seek to interview applicants with non-standard qualifications or who have returned to study less than six months prior to their application.

The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the applicant currently has the necessary skills and capabilities to pursue the chosen degree programme and whether the course is

appropriate to the applicant's interests and aspirations. Attending interview also provides applicants with the opportunity to ask questions and meet staff and students.

Interview days typically take place in March and decisions are then made based on a combination of the application and interview. Interviewees may be interviewed alone or in small groups. Interviewees based overseas will normally be interviewed by telephone or Skype. 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 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. Those applying for a degree which includes a modern language may be tested on linguistic ability.

7. Mature applicants

Mature applicants who meet our entry requirements and can demonstrate recent study within the last five years will normally be assessed on the basis of their application only.

We would usually only admit after interview mature applicants who meet our entry requirements with qualifications achieved over five years ago, who have only returned to education within the last six months prior to application, or who do not meet our published entry requirements but can demonstrate recent or current study and/ or have particularly relevant employment history or life experience.

Selected applicants will be invited to interview as described in **6. Interviews** above.

Mature applicants who do not meet our standard entry requirements and who cannot demonstrate recent study, relevant employment history or life experience will usually be advised to gain some academic experience before reapplying. Current and prospective applicants in this position should consider applying to our [Foundation Year in the Arts and Humanities](#) or taking an Access course, A-level, Open University foundation module or equivalent study.

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 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

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 courses within the University at the end of year one.

Direct entry into year two or three is not possible.

Acceptance is at the discretion of the faculty and is subject to there being space available on the degree programme to which the applicant is applying.

2. Additional information

Liberal Arts is only available as a Single Honours degree. It cannot be studied as half of a Joint Honours degree.

The University can only guarantee places if the exact terms of the offer are met, however offer holders would not automatically be unsuccessful if the terms of the offer are missed by one grade. 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: arts-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 928 8147.