

## 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  
BA Music (W300)

Joint Honours  
BA Music & French (WR31)  
BA Music & German (WR32)  
BA Music & Italian (WR33)

## 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 (achieved and/or predicted), which forms 100 per cent of our assessment, weighting GCSEs as 20 per cent and A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) as 80 per cent.

The procedure for admissions to the Joint Honours music and modern language degrees is the same as Single Honours BA Music, with consideration being given independently by members of the admissions team. Applicants for these courses are advised to also read the admissions statement for Modern Languages.

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.

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), the year abroad for modern languages courses, 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.

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

## **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**

Applicants are expected to have A-level Music (predicted or achieved) or an equivalent qualification. If an applicant has been unable to study A-level Music (or equivalent), we would consider Grade 8 in Music Theory at Merit or Distinction as a suitable alternative qualification.

Applicants are normally expected to have achieved or be working towards an Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) Grade 8 or Trinity Grade 8 examination on their principal instrument, voice or in Music Theory on admission. While occasional exceptions may be made, applicants studying A-level Music (or equivalent) as well as Grade

8 are more likely to be offered a place. Applicants should state these music qualifications clearly in the qualifications section of their application.

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

### **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. In these cases we consider what the personal statement can tell us about:

- the applicant's experience with and interest in different aspects of music and in studying music in a broad intellectual context;
- about performance skills and experience;
- teamwork skills;
- aspirations for the further development of musical abilities and knowledge.

The statement should communicate clearly the applicant's range of musical experiences and interests. It should also show awareness of the nature of the course applied for, its suitability to the musical and professional aspirations, and any plans the applicant has beyond the course.

Applicants for a Joint Honours degrees (WR31, WR32, WR33) would also be expected to show an interest in and commitment to the chosen language, possibly demonstrated by time spent in one or more countries where the language to be studied is spoken, knowledge and appreciation of the linguistic culture and evidence of critical thinking and analytical skills.

### **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.

In assessing the school reference, we are looking for:

- independent confirmation of qualities described in the personal statement (especially motivation, commitment, ability to deal with change and challenges, teamwork)
- up-to-date and detailed reports on progress in the subjects being studied as a back-up to the grades predicted
- comments on the extent and quality of any contribution made to the musical and general life of the school (and beyond).

### **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 form 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 also be tested on linguistic ability.

## **7. Mature applicants**

The applications of 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 form as described in the previous sections.

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.

## **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).

## Other

### 1. Transfers

Applicants seeking entry into year two of any of the BA courses offered by the School of Music should normally have passed the first year of an equivalent BA degree at another university at 2:1 standard (or, if they are applying during this first year, would receive an offer conditional on passing the year to 2:1 standard). These applicants should also be aware that direct entry into year two of these courses is subject to the admissions tutors' discretion and the availability of places in that year group; if we make an offer to an applicant, it may be for first-year entry only.

In the case of applicants who have studied on a course elsewhere with a substantially different focus than the Bristol BA (eg a performance-centred programme at a conservatoire), we would need detailed information about units/modules studied, and may invite the applicant for an interview, before we can make a decision.

### 2. Additional information

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.