

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 Philosophy (V500)

Joint Honours courses (offered in conjunction with other Schools)

BA English and Philosophy (QV35)

BSc Mathematics and Philosophy (VG51)

MSci Mathematics and Philosophy (GV15)

BSc Philosophy and Economics (VL51)

BA Philosophy and French (RV15)

BA Philosophy and German (RV25)

BA Philosophy and Italian (RV35)

BSc Philosophy and Politics (VL52)

BA Philosophy and Portuguese (RV55)

BA Philosophy and Russian (RV75)

BA Philosophy and Spanish (RV45)

BA Philosophy and Theology (VV56)

BSc Physics and Philosophy (FV35)

MSci Physics and Philosophy (FVH5)

BSc Sociology and Philosophy (LV35)

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 scored according to their achieved or predicted A2 results and GCSE results (or equivalent) using the following weighting:

Course	A Levels	GCSE	Personal Statement
BA Philosophy (V500)	80%	20%	-
BA English and Philosophy (QV35)	20%	10%	70%
BSc Mathematics and Philosophy	85%	15%	-
MSci Mathematics and Philosophy	85%	15%	-
BSc Philosophy and Economics (VL51)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and French (RV15)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and German (RV25)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Italian (RV35)	80%	20%	-
BSc Philosophy and Politics (VL52)	60%	-	40%
BA Philosophy and Portuguese (RV55)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Russian (RV75)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Spanish (RV45)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Theology (VV56)	70%	30%	-
BSc Physics and Philosophy	80%	20%	-
MSci Physics and Philosophy	80%	20%	-
BSc Sociology and Philosophy	40%	-	60%

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their application 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.

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 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 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.

We will only call applicants to interview if necessary to complete their assessment (eg mature applicants or applicants with non-standard qualifications). Interviews are not part of the typical admissions process for philosophy courses.

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

All our philosophy students are expected to master basic formal logic, and contemporary philosophy is informed by and reflects upon the theories and results of the sciences (natural and social); philosophy is like the sciences in so far as it requires logical and mathematical thinking, and makes use of symbolic calculi. However, philosophy students are also expected to engage in textual interpretation and essay writing. Hence, we are looking for applicants with a rare combination of skills traditionally associated with both the arts and sciences, who are also highly motivated to pursue philosophical inquiry. We are therefore particularly interested in applicants' GCSE results in mathematics, science and English language, and we look favourably on applicants who combine excellence in both science and arts or humanities at A-level.

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

3. Personal statement criteria

In cases where we refer to the personal statement and reference to differentiate between applicants, the criteria will include the following:

- Interest in and commitment to subject;
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding;
- Problem-solving, analytical and practical skills;
- Ability to construct an argument and explain a philosophical problem;

- Appropriateness of the chosen University course to declared interests and aspirations;
- Non-academic achievement/experience, extra-curricular activities, positions of responsibility;
- Other relevant skills, eg foreign languages;
- Relevant reading/research beyond A-level syllabus;
- Written English: good expression, construction, argument;
- Responses to opportunities and challenges faced.

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.

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.

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 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 alone.

We would usually only admit after interview those 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 (see **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 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

Transfer into single honours philosophy from the various joint schools is rarely possible.

Direct entry into year two of any philosophy degree is only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Where permitted, transfers are conditional on an excellent performance in philosophy and on a willingness by the student to catch up on elements of the first year they have missed.

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.