

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 Honours in Physics (F300)
MSci Theoretical Physics (F340)
MSci Honours in Physics (F303)
MSci Honours in Physics with Study in Continental Europe (F304)
MSci Honours in Physics with Industrial Experience (F305)
BSc Honours in Physics with Astrophysics (F3F5)
MSci Honours in Physics with Astrophysics (F3FM)
BSc Joint Honours in Physics and Philosophy (FV35)
MSci Joint Honours in Physics and Philosophy (FVH5)
BSc Physics with a Preliminary Year of Study (F308)

**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.*

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.

We cannot consider any direct applications. All applications that are received on time (in line with UCAS application cycle deadlines) are guaranteed equal consideration.

All applicants are allocated scores based on their academic record, which forms 100 per cent of our assessment (80 per cent A-levels or equivalent, 20 per cent GCSEs).

We do not consider any direct applications to the University. Please note that it is sometimes necessary to delay making decisions until the majority of applications have been received, so as to ensure fair consideration for all candidates.

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

Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or age.

3. Interview or visit day

If you are made an offer you will be given the opportunity to attend one of the School of Physics visit days to see something of our teaching and research, meet and talk with academic staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students, and take a tour of the building. Parents are welcome to attend; however, because of a restriction on numbers we request that no more than one visitor attends with each applicant. Details of these events will be sent to you once an offer has been made.

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.

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

Academic attainment in mathematics and physics are most important for a physics degree, and our assessment also takes account of both the appropriateness of the additional subject(s) offered and the grades predicted or obtained. We would expect to see high grades in Science and Mathematics subjects as well as English at GCSE level. We consider grades of examinations previously taken, and give credit to the top eight GCSEs.

Account is also taken of medical evidence and any other mitigating factors that may have affected examination performance, or constraints that have limited the choice of A-level programmes.

A-levels in General Studies or Critical Thinking are not counted as part of offers, nor are they considered in the academic assessment of applicants.

3. Personal statement criteria

In some cases we may need to refer to the personal statement and reference to differentiate between applicants with very similar academic profiles. If this is the case, then the admissions team looks for evidence in the personal statement that applicants are well informed, and appreciate the importance of mathematics in a physics degree, and explain why they want to pursue a degree in physics.

Statements about other achievements, specific interests and aspirations will be considered in relation to availability of opportunities to the applicant.

We will also take note of any other information that applicants consider to be relevant and wish to present in this section of their application.

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. Where this is not possible, a non-academic reference should confirm the relevant experience of the applicant as well as mathematical and problem-solving capabilities. It should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

The reports provided by schools and colleges provide valuable information from those who have worked closely with the applicant in an academic setting. We look for strong qualified support from referees, together with an assessment of mathematical ability and of potential for further study.

Information about the applicant's particular achievements and challenges faced are also taken into account when evaluating information about actual or predicted examination performance.

5. Additional tests

Not applicable.

6. Interview

In rare cases where we cannot reach a decision based on the information in the application form, applicants may be called for interview.

We may also interview applicants for the Physics with a Preliminary Year (F308) course if we're uncertain of their level of mathematical skills, or if they have not yet had the opportunity to gain such skills.

Applicants in these categories who we believe have the potential to succeed on our courses may be interviewed by two members of the academic staff (at least one of whom will be an

admissions tutor). Although interviews include some standard questions to facilitate comparison, the procedure is designed to provide an opportunity for each applicant to discuss their individual experience and qualifications.

All decisions are made on merit, with offers made to those applicants we feel would most benefit from our degree courses.

7. Mature applicants

Non-standard applicants (eg those not taking A-levels or examinations with an accepted standard of equivalence) whose applications suggest they have the potential to succeed on one of our courses are considered on an individual basis. We welcome applications from mature students taking an Access course, or who may be taking a limited range of A-levels, although clear mathematical knowledge and ability need to be demonstrated.

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

Transfers between BSc and MSci courses are possible up to the end of year two. Transfers between other Single or Joint Honours courses are usually possible, but remain at the discretion of the department(s).

We will, occasionally, accept suitably qualified students who wish to transfer from another institution directly into year two.

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 rejected 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: sci-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 9288153