

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 Social Policy (L400)
BSc Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods (L402)
MSci Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods (L403)
BSc Social Policy and Politics (LL42)
BSc Social Policy and Sociology (LL43)
BSc Social Policy with Management (LN42)

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 applicants are allocated scores based on their academic record and personal statement, which forms 100 per cent of our assessment. The weightings for each course's assessment (academic record : personal statement) is as follows:

BSc Social Policy (L400)	30 : 70
BSc Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods (L402)	30 : 70
MSci Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods (L403)	30 : 70
BSc Social Policy and Politics (LL42)	25 : 75
BSc Social Policy and Sociology (LL43)	25 : 75
BSc Social Policy with Management (LN42)	25 : 75

Our assessment looks for:

- The applicant's academic potential, and their potential to succeed on our course;
- Their personal statement;
- The reference;

- Exceptional circumstances and/or the educational and social context in which an applicant applies, where there is clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic achievement.

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 be invited to attend a departmental visit day. Visit day attendance is optional but we hope applicants will take the opportunity of visiting the University. We recognise that it is not always practicable for international students to attend a visit day.

Mature applicants with offers will be invited to attend a dedicated Mature Students' visit day. This will involve specially prepared lectures and seminars relevant to their degree course, as well as talks by previous students on the 'mature student experience'.

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 be invited to attend a visit day.

5. Deferred applications

We welcome applications for deferred entry (ie 2016).

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

The standard of academic ability is evaluated from the predicted or actual grades achieved in examinations.

A-levels may be in any subject (excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking). However, when we come to select applicants, all other things being equal, preference may be given to those showing aptitude in subjects that have the most relevance to the course applied for,

specifically social science subjects (particularly sociology for BSc Social Policy and Sociology, and government and politics for BSc Social Policy and Politics).

A-level General studies and A level Critical Thinking are not counted as part of offers, nor are they considered in the academic assessment of applicants.

We will also take previous academic qualifications into account, and credit is awarded for GCSEs achieved at grade C and above, which must include English Language and Mathematics.

For BSc Social Policy with Management (LN42) this must include Mathematics at GCSE grade A or above

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. If this is the case, then the criteria will include the following:

- Interest and commitment to subject;
- The applicant's declared interests and aspirations;
- Evidence of clear thinking, understanding and analytical skills;
- Relevant paid and unpaid work;
- Positions of responsibility at school/college or work;
- Non-academic achievement;
- Standard of written English;
- Responses to any challenges faced;
- Hobbies and interests.

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. 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:

- Academic progress;
- Interest and commitment to subject;
- Appropriateness of the chosen Bristol course in relation to the applicant's declared interests and aspirations;
- Evidence of clear thinking, understanding and analytical skills;
- Positions of responsibility at school/college or work;
- Non-academic achievement;
- Responses to any challenges faced.

5. Additional tests

Not applicable.

6. Interview

In the majority of cases, admissions decisions will be made on the basis of the application alone. However, in some cases an applicant may be invited to attend an interview in order to further discuss their application, eg if the applicant has been out of education for a number of years, or if a non-standard qualification is offered.

Where an interview is required, the following criteria will be considered when assessing the interview performance:

- Interest in subject;
- Evidence of motivation;
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding;
- Academic and non-academic achievement and/or experience;
- Communication skills.

7. Mature applicants

We welcome applications from mature students. We may interview mature applicants, as described in **6: Interview** above.

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

Applications for direct entry into year two are considered from suitable applicants who have completed the first year of a degree course with similar content at another institution. However, this is dependent on availability of places and the suitability of previous study.

2. Additional information

Applications for Joint Honours courses are considered using the same procedures described above, with additional cooperation with the admissions tutor from the joint school.

Please note - cross school/joint honours programmes may have additional/different selection criteria, specific to the particular course of study. Prospective applicants are therefore strongly advised also to refer to the admissions statement provided by the partner school for their intended course of study.

Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Undergraduate Admissions Office: socsci-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 928 8154.