

Undergraduate admissions statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#).

Year of admissions cycle: 2016

Courses covered:

Single Honours:

BSc Computer Science (G400)

MEng Computer Science with Study in Continental Europe (G401)

MEng Computer Science (G403)

MEng Computer Science with Study Abroad (entry by transfer from G401 or G403)

Joint Honours:

BSc Mathematics and Computer Science (GG14)

MSci Mathematics and Computer Science (GG1K)

1. Admissions process

1.1. Admissions team

Applications are assessed by a centralised team in close co-operation with the admissions tutor(s).

1.2. 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 on the academic record (A-levels or equivalent), which forms 100 per cent of our assessment.

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.

1.3. Interview or visit day

Applicants to whom an offer is likely to be made are invited to attend one of our school's pre-offer visit days; applicants are given the choice of several alternative dates for this visit,

usually between November and March. The schedule for the pre-offer visit day includes a 30-minute informal group tutorial session which gives you a chance to find out more about the department and the courses we offer. At all times, applicants are encouraged to ask questions about any aspect of the degree courses on offer. Although there are other opportunities to visit the department, such as University open days, offers are usually only made to applicants who visit as part of our programme of pre-offer visit days. Allowance may be made for applicants who cannot make a visit day due to exceptional circumstances, in these cases the applicant should inform the admissions team as soon as possible. The department will contact such applicants by phone for an informal discussion.

1.4. Correspondence with applicants

All correspondence relating to an applicant'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 and put on 'Hold' pending a decision later in the cycle.

If you submitted your application by 15 January then the final deadline by which you will receive a decision is 7 May. Most decisions are made well before this date. We monitor the number of offers we make carefully and may hold some applications until later in the cycle.

2. Criteria for assessing applicants

To assess an application we require:

- A full academic history from age 16 onwards, including any retakes or uncompleted qualifications.
- Predicted grades for any qualifications you are currently taking. Predicted grades can only come from your school or referee. These must include an overall grade (if applicable) AND where a particular subject is specified in the entry requirements, the achieved grades or predicted grades for that subject, and any related or major subjects you are studying.
- If predicted grades are not available, then we will accept a transcript showing the results of your previous year's courses or examinations.

2.1. Academic entry requirements

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Bac, 14-19 Diploma, 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 through the [International Office](#).

All applications must be submitted through UCAS or Common Application; we cannot consider any direct applications.

Applications that are received on time are guaranteed equal consideration.

2.2. Additional academic criteria

We initially rank applicants according to the A-level subjects offered and predicted/actual grades. We will be looking to see that you have or will have an A-level in Mathematics or equivalent and whilst all other A-level subjects are fully considered as well (with the exception of Critical Thinking and General Studies) applicants with preferred subjects will score higher than those without preferred subjects.

The weightings we use to rank A-level subjects are as follows:

- Weighting 1 (required subject):
Mathematics
- Weighting 0.8:
All other subjects.

A-level students interested in applying for the Mathematics and Computer Science degree courses should note that Further Mathematics, STEP or AEA Mathematics are highly desirable, but not required, alongside Mathematics A-level. We know that Further Mathematics is not available to students in all schools and colleges, or that it is often taught in a restricted amount of time. We would urge prospective applicants to study Further Mathematics to the highest level available to them. If A-level Further Mathematics, or STEP and AEA Mathematics are not available in your school or college, or if they are taught in a restricted manner (for example in less time than is normally allocated to an A-level subject), please ask your referee to make this clear in your application.

A-level Computer Science, Computing or ICT are not required for any of our courses. For those looking for a good grounding in the principles of Computing pre-A-level, we do recommend the new GCSE in Computing. Again, however, this is not a requirement for admission to any of our degrees.

We would encourage applicants to tell us about any particularly strong performances in modules in mathematics or any closely related subject.

All applicants for our engineering courses at Bristol are expected to hold, or be predicted to achieve, A-level Maths at grade A (or equivalent). However, it is recognised that applicants studying Access to HE or BTEC qualifications may not have the opportunity to take up this additional qualification at their Further Education (FE) school/college.

Applicants who are unable to supplement their current study with A-level Maths may therefore be invited to undertake a maths test at the University in the spring, which will examine similar content to A-level Maths core modules. Candidates who achieved A-level grade A standard in the test will then have their applications progressed for further consideration by the selection team. Further information about the process will be available in autumn 2015 on our [applicants' website](#).

2.3. 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:

- Evidence of further mathematics / additional academic preparation and achievements;
- Competitions, other mathematical or computer science-related activity;
- Personal factors such as relevant work experience, being given a level of responsibility (eg mentoring, head girl/boy, etc);
- A good standard of written English, expression and construction of the personal statement.

Overall, you should demonstrate a genuine interest in the chosen course and basic knowledge of the subject, highlighting your skills in mathematics and problem solving. You should also give evidence of strong study skills, responsibility, leadership and team working, commitment and achievement, both in academic and extra-curricular activities. Any relevant work experience or placements should be highlighted along with any relevant reading/research beyond the A-Level course syllabus. We are also interested in evidence of organisation, self-motivation, and the ability to balance different activities.

2.4. Reference criteria

References will be assessed for information on the applicant's motivation, ability to work independently, powers of analysis and expression. If the referee believes the applicant's performance does not reflect their ability, due to educational context and/or special circumstances, the applicant should complete an extenuating circumstances form at bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/. We are unable to consider extenuating circumstances without this form.

An applicant's reference 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 and give evidence of responsibility and commitment as well as mathematical and problem solving capabilities. It should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

2.5. Interview

Applicants who are invited to attend a pre-offer visit day are expected to do so as an indicator of commitment to their chosen course. The visit day includes an informal interview with an academic member of the department. Although primarily designed to establish each applicant's suitability for the course, the interviewer will also look at other criteria which may include, but are not limited to:

- Demonstration of mathematical, analytical and technical skills
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding
- Evidence of interest in and commitment to the subject
- Non-Academic achievements and/or experience
- Responses to challenges faced.

The academic does not make a selection decision. The informal interviews are used to determine the level of offer that may be made and to provide a more comprehensive picture of each applicant for the admissions team.

Applicants who do not meet the standard entry criteria but for whom the course may be suitable will be invited to attend a more formal interview as part of the visit day. All interviews intended to select students are conducted by two people including a member of staff with training in fair and effective recruitment techniques and are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

A decision will be made on your application after the visit day. This decision will take into consideration all aspects of the application (personal statement, reference and interview feedback).

2.6. Mature applicants

The school welcomes mature applicants; evidence of recent study and examinations is expected. In some cases, mature applicants may be invited to a formal interview (see **2.5. Interview**).

2.7. International applicants

International applicants will be subject to the criteria as detailed here:

bristol.ac.uk/international/countries

We also consider applications through the Common Application system, and the same criteria and assessment used for UCAS applicants are applied.

While we do accept foundation programmes please be aware that they are designed for applicants who have not been able to take the correct level of qualification in their home country. Therefore, we do not consider applicants who are taking a foundation programme and have previously completed A-levels or equivalent qualifications that do not meet our entry grade requirements, except in exceptional circumstances.

2.8. 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 bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

2.9. Contextual information

We take a holistic approach to assessing all applications, ensuring that an applicant's educational and social contexts are taken into consideration, where supported by clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic performance. 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.

Applicants may be eligible for a contextual offer if they are currently applying from (or in the 15/16 academic year were in full-time education in) a school ranked in the bottom 40 per

cent in any of the following categories for the: 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 during the scoring process; 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.

To be eligible for a contextual offer, applicants currently attending school must apply from a school in the list below:

[2016 cycle list here](#)

Applicants not currently attending school must have been in full-time education in one of the following schools in the academic year 15/16:

[2015 cycle list here](#)

Please note that we use the "applying from" school code or the education history listed on the UCAS form to determine an applicant's eligibility for a contextual offer. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure these are correct.

The University reviews its definition of educational disadvantage 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 (eg independent school, comprehensive school, academy) or an applicant's parents' experience of higher education.

3. Offers

3.1 Typical Offers

Typical offers for A-levels and other UK qualifications can be found in the entry data in the [undergraduate course finder](#). Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will be made equivalent to the published A-level offer.

We may make lower 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](#).

3.2 Alternative Offers

If you are not qualified or have an unsuitable academic background for the course to which you originally applied, we may offer you the opportunity to be considered for an alternative course in a related subject area. In such cases applicants will receive an email notification providing a list of the alternative options.

4. Other

4.1. Deferred applications

We will consider applications for deferred entry. However deferred applications 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.

4.2. Resits

The department will consider applicants who resit their qualifications.

4.3. Transfers

Applicants may transfer between Computer Science G400 and G403 until the end of the second year as the curriculum for both these degree courses is the same for the first two years.

Applications from students seeking entry directly into year two will be considered on an individual basis. We would usually look for the completion of the first year of a similar degree with an overall mark of at least 65 per cent. In these cases transcripts and other relevant information will be required.

4.4. Extenuating Circumstances

If your education has been significantly disrupted through health or personal problems, disability or specific difficulties with schooling you will need to submit an extenuating circumstances form (available at bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/) to Undergraduate Admissions.

The information provided on the form will be treated confidentially, and will help us to accurately assess your academic performance in light of your situation.

4.5. Policies

All applications are considered in line with our [Admissions policies and procedures](#).

We are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions procedures for all our applicants. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when applicants believe that they have cause for complaint. At this point applicants should follow our [Applicant feedback and complaints procedures](#).

Should an applicant believe that University admissions principles and procedures have been inconsistently or incorrectly applied, these complaints procedures provide a mechanism for objective review.

4.6. 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 narrowly missed.

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 in August after publication of A-level results. International offer holders may be reconsidered earlier depending when their exam results are released.

4.7. Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to our Enquiries team: choosebristol-ug@bristol.ac.uk
or +44 (0)117 3941640.