

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:

MEng Engineering Design (H150)

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.

Applications are assessed for academic competence, leadership ability, engineering interest and breadth of relevant skills. This process is carried out according to fixed criteria and is the same for all applicants.

The standard of academic competence is evaluated from predicted or actual grades in examinations, and the range of subjects offered. Leadership, initiative, engineering interest, and breadth of relevant skills are assessed from information given in the personal statement and the reference.

The weighting for our assessment is as follows:

- GCSEs: 10%
- A-level: 35%
- Personal statement: 55%

Following our initial scoring, applicants will be contacted to complete an additional form for more information about their skills and experience.

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.

1.3. Interview or visit day

The highest-scoring applicants will be invited for interview. The interview is a critical part of the application process and we do not make offer to applicants without interview. Partner companies may be involved in the interview process, as they will be working with our students for summer placements and the third-year placement. An International applicant who is resident overseas and is genuinely not able to come to Bristol for interview, will be interviewed either through one of our partner companies who have representatives in the relevant country, or by Skype. EU applicants are normally expected to attend the interview in Bristol. (See **2.5. Interview** below)

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

General Studies and Critical Thinking are not counted as part of our offers, nor are they considered in the academic assessment of applicants.

2.3. Personal statement criteria

The course aims to recruit very able students with a physical science background and to give them experiences that will make them able to take a significant role in major design exercises, later taking a leading role. Our industrial advisors insist that the leading graduates they recruit must have an extremely good understanding of engineering concepts and principles across a wide spectrum of engineering, but must also be expert in a chosen discipline. The aim is to fit these students to be the engineering leaders of the future.

When assessing applicants' personal statements, we will look for:

- an interest in technical or engineering subjects, and any particularly strong performances in modules in mathematics or any closely related subject;
- a real grasp of an activity that requires technical understanding (eg. an understanding of the technical aspects of sport, music technology, technical theatre or engineering modelling, etc);
- evidence of clear thinking, understanding and problem-solving skills;
- experience of leadership roles within or outside school;
- wide-ranging extra-curricular activities;
- evidence of team-working (eg. as part of a group in a project at school, or within an extra-curricular activity);
- good written and oral communication skills, and the ability to express complex ideas clearly.

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.

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.

Referees should note that the reference will be used as a basis for the assessment of academic performance and as support for the personal statement. Assessors will want to consider the accuracy and consistency of the predicted grades in the light of previous GCSE and AS-level achievement (or reasons why this is not the case), evidence of effort and a positive attitude towards studies, and if there are any educational or special circumstances. Assessors will be interested in the applicant's potential for University level academic study and their contributions to school or the community.

2.5. Interview

The interview lasts for about 45 minutes and is used to decide whether an offer should be made. Interviewers are looking for a wide range of interpersonal skills, as well as leadership ability and engineering interest.

Interviews are conducted by a member of the academic staff who have been trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques and are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities, plus a representative of one of the companies that support this degree. Company representatives who also take part in the interviews are naturally evaluating whether their organisation would consider employing the applicant, as our sponsoring companies are expected to take students on placement during the degree.

During the interview, the panel is looking for evidence of skills in the following areas: teamwork, planning, the ability to control and direct, initiative, organisation, communication, analysis, problem-solving, self-motivation, intellectual curiosity, professionalism, technical competence, self-confidence, innovation, and the ability to listen and evaluate.

Part of the interview process is a physical reasoning test to evaluate an applicant's ability to think and respond. There is also a group design exercise. Applicants are also given a tour of the Faculty of Engineering and will have the opportunity to talk about the degree course with staff and current students.

2.6. Mature applicants

We welcome applications from mature students. Recent qualifications in mathematics and physics are essential, however entrance requirements can be varied in appropriate cases. The Personal Statement and reference will be used to confirm the relevant experience of the applicant and show evidence of responsibility and commitment, and the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

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 www.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 (e.g. 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](#).

4. Other

4.1. Deferred applications

We will consider applications for deferred entry. 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.

4.2. Resits

Applicants who resit their qualifications will be considered for our Engineering Design degree. However, such applicants may be at a disadvantage in the later stages of assessment when considered alongside other equally strong candidates who have not undertaken resits.

4.3. Transfers

Due to the highly specialised nature of this course we are unable to consider applications to enter into year two, either by internal transfer or by transfer from another university. Any application received for year two entry therefore would automatically be considered for entry to year one of the course only.

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 39 41640.