

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:

BSc Geography (F800)

MSci Geography (F803)

BSc Geography with Study Abroad (09F4)

BSc Geography with Study in Continental Europe (F801)

BSc Geography with Quantitative Research Methods (F802)

MSci Geography with Quantitative Research Methods (F804)

1. Admissions process

1.1. Admissions team

Applications are assessed by a centralised team in close co-operation with 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 based on their academic record (achieved and/or predicted grades). For BSc and MSci Geography (F800 and F803), and BSc and MSci Geography with Quantitative Research Methods (F802 and F804), applications are scored and ranked according to only their academic record using the weighting:

- GCSEs: 30%
- A-levels (or equivalent): 70%

For BSc Geography with Study Abroad (09F4), BSc Geography with Study in Continental Europe (F801) and MSci Geography with Innovation (F805), applications are scored and ranked according to their academic record, AND personal statement and reference with the weighting:

- GCSEs: 10%
- A-levels (or equivalent): 70%
- Personal Statement/reference: 30%

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

1.3. Interview or visit day

All applicants who receive an offer will normally be invited to a visit day. This provides the opportunity to see the city and the University, and to ask questions about the degree courses 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.

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

Candidates without Geography, or a closely related subject, at A-level or equivalent level would be expected to explain this absence in their application.

For our BSc degree with Study in Continental Europe, applicants are expected to have at least a B grade in the relevant language (French, German or Spanish) at GCSE level or equivalent. For students with no demonstrated ability in a relevant language, evidence of a high standard of learning in another non-native language must be presented. These criteria may be waived if, for example, the applicant is a native speaker of the relevant language.

We emphasise that the breadth of material covered in Geography across the humanities and science is wide. We expect to recruit equal numbers to human, physical and mixed geography pathways. To achieve this, we set different thresholds for groups of applicants presenting with different subject combinations.

We will make a lower offer to applicants presenting with three of the science related subjects as listed below:

Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Computing, Design and Technology – Product Design 3D, Environmental Studies, Further Maths, Geography, Geology, Human Biology, Information Technology, Marine Science, Maths, Physics, Statistics.

We also apply the following subject weightings for Level 3 qualifications:

- 1.0:
Biology; Chemistry; Computer Science; Computing; Economics; English Literature; Geography; Geology; Government and Politics; History; Information Technology; Latin; Marine Science; Maths or Further Maths; Philosophy; Physics; Statistics
- 0.8:
All other subjects (except General Studies and Critical Thinking which are excluded).

A-level General Studies and Critical Thinking are not considered towards offers or academic assessment.

2.3. Personal statement criteria

We consider the personal statement to be vital in terms of providing clear indications of the applicant's suitability for the course. We are looking for applicants who address the benefits they see from further study at University level and who suggest what they can offer to an intensive and high quality teaching and learning environment, as well as what they hope to gain from it. We are therefore looking for evidence of:

- Clear and convincing enthusiasm for Geography as a subject of study;
- Evidence of initiative in extending this interest beyond formal classroom provisions;
- Non-academic achievements and experience including positions of responsibility;
- A good standard of written English with clear expression and structure.

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. The reference will often include evidence of the applicants potential for further academic study, independent and original thought and unsupervised learning across the curriculum, particularly in geography.

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 an academic reference is unable to be obtained, a non-academic reference should confirm the relevant experience of the applicant and should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

2.5. Interview

We do not interview applicants to Geography courses.

2.6. Mature applicants

Applications from mature applicants or those with unusual educational backgrounds will be considered on a case-by case basis. Evidence of recent study and examinations within the last two years is expected.

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; i.e. 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](#).

3.2 Aspirational Offers

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. Any offer made would be at the standard level.

3.3 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 (i.e. 2017). However, deferred applicants should be made aware that in fairness to other applicants in the following cycle, we can only make a limited number of deferred offers in each cycle. Those applying for deferred entry will be expected to justify this in their statement.

4.2. Resits

The School of Geographical Sciences will consider applicants who resit their qualifications.

4.3. Transfers

Transfers into the first year of Geography courses are considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account any grades achieved by the applicant during their university studies, the subjects studied, space on the course at Bristol and any other relevant information.

Transfers into the second year of the course are not accepted unless there are exceptional extenuating circumstances.

Transfers by students currently studying another subject at the University of Bristol may be considered for first year entry provided they meet certain requirements including any grades achieved during their studies, standard academic entry requirements, space on the course and other relevant information.

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)117 394 1639.