

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:

BA History (V100)

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 applicants are allocated scores based on their academic record, and personal statement/reference. The respective weightings are as follows:

- Academic score: 30%
- Personal statement/reference score: 70%

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their application 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 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.

Applicants who receive an offer will receive an invitation to a visit day.

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 outstanding qualifications. 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

History is a mandatory subject but we welcome applications from applicants offering it with any combination of any other A2 subjects (or equivalent), apart from General Studies which would not be included in our assessment of applicants or in the terms of offers.

No tests are currently used as a standard part of the selection process for BA History.

In the event that the department should require the submission of a piece of written work in support of an application, the reasons for the request will be explained and pertinent directions given. See also **2.5. Interview** below.

2.3. Personal statement criteria

Given the very large number of applications we receive each year from applicants who have achieved or are predicted to achieve high grades, we necessarily place substantial emphasis upon the quality of the personal statement.

We seek evidence of:

- serious interest in, and commitment to, the active study of history; applicants who have gained a relevant broader experience of the practice of history (e.g. volunteering at a museum, independent research projects, etc.) are also given credit.
- We are particularly eager to identify applicants who are keen to engage in independent research, who wish to learn how to undertake such historical research at university level and whose interest in the subject extends beyond the A Level (or equivalent) History syllabus.
- wider reading and of a critical engagement with such reading; evidence of coherent, analytical and critical thinking, with credit given for well-constructed and accurately expressed argument;
- an applicant's understanding of how other relevant disciplines can inform the study of history, and whether the course applied for is appropriate to the applicant's declared historical interests and aspiration;
- clear motivation to study, eg attendance at a university summer school, a targeted Access Scheme (such as Access to Bristol, the Mutual Recognition Scheme, etc.), or participation in outreach activities;
- non-academic achievements and experience, extra-curricular activities and positions of responsibility held, including paid and voluntary employment, bearing in mind the range of opportunities available to the applicant and the nature of any particular educational or personal challenges s/he may have faced.

Our mission is to identify and attract those applicants who satisfy all the criteria outlined above and whose academic and intellectual interests and potential are relevant to our methods of teaching and areas of expertise within the department.

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 <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/>. We are unable to consider individual extenuating circumstances without this form.

References should ideally be from a school or college, or 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. The reference 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:

- evidence of high levels of motivation; an ability to work independently; and intellectual inquisitiveness;
- the ability of the applicant to engage in historical research; their interest in undertaking such research;
- the applicant's powers of critical analysis and potential for further development in these areas;
- ways in which the applicant's performance does not reflect their ability, eg educational/special circumstances.

2.5. Interview

Interviews are not usually part of our selection process. However, we may interview applicants with non-standard qualifications or who have returned to study less than six months prior to their application.

The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the applicant currently has the necessary skills and capabilities to pursue the chosen degree programme, and whether the course is appropriate to the applicant's interests and aspirations. Attending an interview also provides applicants with the opportunity to ask questions and to meet staff and students.

Interview days typically take place in March and decisions are then made based on a combination of the application and interview. Interviewees may be interviewed alone or in small groups. Interviewees based overseas will normally be interviewed by telephone or Skype. All interviews are conducted by two members of staff, at least one of whom is trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques. All interviews are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

The principal assessment criteria are an applicant's interest in and commitment to the subject, his/her capacity for clear thinking and oral expression, for the critical analysis of arguments and evidence, and for working independently at degree level.

2.6. Mature applicants

Mature applicants who meet our entry requirements and can demonstrate recent study within the last five years will normally be assessed on the basis of their application only.

We would usually only interview mature applicants who meet our entry requirements with qualifications achieved over five years ago, and/or have only returned to education within the last six months prior to application, or those who do not meet our published entry requirements but who can demonstrate recent or current study and/or have particularly relevant employment history or life experience.

Selected applicants will be invited to interview as described in **2.5. Interview** above.

Mature applicants who do not meet our standard entry requirements and who cannot demonstrate recent study, relevant employment history or life experience will usually be advised to gain some academic experience before reapplying. Applicants in this position should consider applying to our [Foundation Year in the Arts and Humanities](#) or taking an Access course, A-level, Open University foundation module or equivalent.

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](#).

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.

Applicants are expected to describe briefly in their personal statement how their 'gap' year might subsequently benefit their university career. Preference may be given to those demonstrating a clear and relevant academic purpose, or with significant health or personal issues.

4.2. Resits

The Department of History will consider applicants who resit their qualifications.

4.3. Transfers

Requests for transfers to our courses may be made from suitable applicants from other degree programmes within the University, subject to the conditions set out in the [Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#). This is at the department's discretion and relies on spaces being available.

Generally, we would expect students to begin their studies in the first year of the programme, but suitably qualified applicants who have completed the first year of an

appropriate degree programme at another institution may seek entry to year two, but acceptance is at the discretion of the department and is subject to there being spaces available. Such applications must be submitted in the usual way through UCAS, indicating the year of entry as Year 2, with reasons for requesting such a transfer clearly outlined in the Personal Statement.

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 1636.