

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:

BA Philosophy (V500)

Joint Honours courses (offered in conjunction with other schools):

BA Philosophy and French (RV15)

BA Philosophy and German (RV25)

BA Philosophy and Italian (RV35)

BA Philosophy and Portuguese (RV55)

BA Philosophy and Russian (RV75)

BA Philosophy and Spanish (RV45)

BA Philosophy and Theology (VV56)

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 scored according to their achieved or predicted A2 results, GCSE results (or equivalent) and Personal Statement using the following weightings:

Course	A-levels	GCSE	Personal Statement
BA Philosophy (V500)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and French (RV15)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and German (RV25)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Italian (RV35)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Portuguese (RV55)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Russian (RV75)	80%	20%	-
BA Philosophy and Spanish (RV45)	80%	20%	-

BA Philosophy and Theology (VV56)	70%	30%	-
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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.

All applications for Joint Honours courses are also assessed in relation to the other subject's selection criteria, so the other relevant admissions statement should also be consulted.

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 have received an offer will normally be invited to a visit day in the spring term. This provides the opportunity to see the city and the University, and to ask questions about the course(s) 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. We will only call applicants to interview if necessary to complete their assessment (eg. mature applicants or applicants with non-standard qualifications). Interviews are therefore not a routine part of the admissions process for Philosophy courses.

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

All our Philosophy students are expected to master basic formal logic. Contemporary philosophy is informed by, and reflects upon, the theories and results of the sciences (natural and social). Philosophy is like the sciences in so far as it requires logical and mathematical thinking, and makes use of symbolic calculi. Philosophy students are also expected to engage in textual interpretation and essay writing. Hence, we are looking for applicants with a rare combination of skills traditionally associated with both the arts and sciences, who are also highly motivated to pursue philosophical inquiry. We are therefore particularly interested in applicants' GCSE results in mathematics, science and English language, and we look favourably on applicants who combine excellence in both science and arts or humanities at A-level, IB or equivalent.

A-levels in General Studies and Critical Thinking are not included in our assessment of applicants or in the terms of conditional offers.

All applications for Joint Honours courses are also assessed in relation to the other subject's selection criteria so the other relevant admissions statement should also be consulted.

2.3. Personal statement criteria

In cases where we refer to the Personal Statement and academic reference to differentiate between applicants, the criteria used will include the following:

- Interest in and commitment to subject;
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding;
- Problem-solving, analytical and practical skills;
- Ability to construct an argument and explain a philosophical problem;
- Appropriateness of the chosen University course to declared interests and aspirations;
- Non-academic achievement/experience, extra-curricular activities, positions of responsibility;
- Other relevant skills, eg. foreign languages;
- Relevant reading/research beyond A-level syllabus;
- Written English: good expression, construction, argument;
- Responses to opportunities and challenges faced.

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.

2.5. Interview

Interviews do not usually form part of our selection process for Philosophy courses. However, we may seek to interview some applicants who have 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 and whether the course is appropriate to the applicant's interests and aspirations. Attending interview also provides such applicants with the opportunity to ask questions and meet staff and students.

Interview days typically take place in March and decisions are then made based on a combination of the application form 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. Those applying for a degree which includes a modern language may also be tested on linguistic ability.

2.6. Mature applicants

The applications of 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 alone.

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

Selected applicants will be invited to interview (see **2.5. Interviews** above).

The criteria for assessing interview performance may include, for example:

- Demonstrated interest in, suitability for, and commitment to the subject;
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding, problem solving and analytical skills;
- Standard of spoken English;
- Appropriateness of the Bristol course in relation to the applicant's declared interests and aspirations;
- Non-academic achievement and/or experience, or extra-curricular interests, that indicate the likely contribution an applicant will make to the life of the University;
- Other relevant skills.

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. Current and prospective 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 study.

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 (as long as this is in a non-specified subject). 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. Please note that receipt of this email does not guarantee an offer will be made.

4. Other

4.1. Deferred applications

We will consider applications for deferred entry (ie. for 2017 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

The Department of Philosophy 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 two, 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)117 928 8147.