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 Experimental Psychology C801
MSci Experimental Psychology C802

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.

Applications are scored and ranked based on their academic record, according to their achieved or predicted A-level results with the following weighting:

- A-level: 100%
- GCSE: 0%
- Personal Statement: 0%

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their application only; we will not take into account any additional information received from an applicant or institution, unless we have requested it.

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. 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).
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 15th January then the final deadline by which you will receive a decision is 7th 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
Our preferred A-level (or equivalent) subjects are biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, further mathematics, human biology, psychology, English language, English literature and history.

Please note that applicants taking both mathematics and further mathematics are required to have their third A-level from the list of preferred subjects.

All other subjects are also given full consideration. The weightings we use to rank A-level subjects are as follows:
• Weighting 1:
  Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Human Biology, Psychology, English Language, English Literature and History.

• Weighting 0.8:
  All other subjects (excluding General Studies and Critical Thinking).

A-levels in General Studies or Critical Thinking are not counted as part of offers, nor are they considered in the academic assessment of applicants.

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 admissions team look for:

• evidence that the applicant is well-informed and appreciates the status of psychology as an empirical science, and initiative in extending a scientific interest in psychology beyond formal classroom provision.
• evidence of wider non-academic interests.
• a well-written statement in terms of its structure and power of expression.

Any other information considered relevant by the applicant will also be noted.

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.

We look for strong qualified support from referees. Information about the applicant’s particular achievements, and challenges faced, are also taken into account. The reference will often include evidence of the applicant’s potential for further academic study, independent and original thought and unsupervised learning across the curriculum. We will also consider information relating to educational or special circumstances that explains why an applicant’s performance may not reflect their true ability.

2.5. Interview
Interviews will be reserved for cases where the application relies on non-standard academic qualifications. All interviews are conducted by two people, with at least one trained in fair and
effective recruitment, and are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities. Non-mature applicants are interviewed only in exceptional circumstances. The criteria for assessing interview performance may include, for example:

- Demonstrated interest in, suitability for, and commitment to the subject;
- Awareness, and elementary knowledge, of the scientific merits and requirements of the course;
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding, problem solving and analytical skills;
- Motivation for learning, questioning and applying knowledge within psychological science.
- Standard of spoken English;
- Clarity of verbal and written expression;
- Appropriateness of the Bristol course in relation to the applicant's declared interests and aspirations;
- Academic potential, either through background qualifications or experience;
- 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;
- Positions of responsibility held;
- Other relevant skills.

2.6. Mature applicants
Mature applicants will be assessed in the same way as other applicants. We interview a selection of suitable mature applicants. If the applicant has been out of education for an extended period of time, or offers non-standard qualifications, we may invite them to attend an interview (see 2.5. Interview above).

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.

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.

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. 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 School of Psychology will consider applicants who resit their qualifications.

4.3. Transfers

Internal

We consider requests for transfers to our courses from suitable applicants from other degree courses within the University at the end of year one. Students who have completed a first year of study and who seek to transfer are typically expected to obtain a minimum of 60 per cent overall during their first year of their undergraduate degree and to have met the criteria, as specified, for entry at year one. Transfers are dependent on the availability of places.

External

We consider applications from suitable applicants who have completed the first year of a degree at another institution for entry direct into year one or two, but this is dependent on the availability of places, and the demonstration of academic achievement and profiles consistent with the ongoing cohort of current undergraduates. Students who seek to transfer are typically expected to obtain a minimum of 60 per cent overall during their first year of their undergraduate degree in psychology from another University.
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 office: choosebristol-ug@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 928 8153.