

## Undergraduate admissions statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#).

**Year of admissions cycle:** 2017

### Courses covered:

Single Honours:

- BSc Politics and International Relations (L200)
- BSc Politics and International Relations with Study Abroad (L201)
- BSc Politics with Quantitative Methods (L202)
- MSci Politics with Quantitative Methods (L203)
- BSc Politics with Quantitative Methods with Study Abroad (L204)
- BSc Sociology (L300)
- BSc Sociology with Study Abroad (L301)
- BSc Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L302)
- MSci Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L303)
- BSc Sociology with Quantitative Research Methods with Study Abroad (L304)

Joint Honours:

- BSc Politics and Sociology (LL23)
- BSc Sociology and Philosophy (LV35)
- BSc Philosophy and Politics (VL52)

## 1. Admissions process

### 1.1. Admissions team

Applications are assessed by a centralised team in close co-operation with School Recruitment and Admissions Officer(s).

### 1.2. Application assessment methods

We consider all applications on an equal basis. We do not segregate applications by the type of educational institution attended.

All applications that are received on time (in accordance with UCAS deadlines) are guaranteed equal consideration.

We score and rank all applications according to their (achieved or predicted) A-levels and their GCSE results (or equivalent), using the following weightings. Please note that these weightings differ by course chosen:

Course	A-levels	Personal statement
BSc Politics and International Relations (L200)	30%	70%

BSc Politics and International Relations with Study Abroad (L201)	30%	70%
BSc Politics with Quantitative Methods (L202)	30%	70%
MSci Politics with Quantitative Methods (L203)	30%	70%
BSc Politics with Quantitative Methods with Study Abroad (L204)	30%	70%
BSc Sociology (L300)	30%	70%
BSc Sociology with Study Abroad (L301)	30%	70%
BSc Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L302)	30%	70%
MSci Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L303)	30%	70%
BSc Sociology with Quantitative Research Methods with Study Abroad (L304)	30%	70%
BSc Politics and Sociology (LL23)	30%	70%
BSc Sociology and Philosophy (LV35)	40%	60%
BSc Philosophy and Politics (VL52)	40%	60%

We will assess your application on the basis of your UCAS form (or Common Application) only; we will not take into account any additional information you send us, 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.

We do not discriminate against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or age.

### **1.3. Visit day**

All UK candidates who receive an offer are strongly encouraged to attend one of our visit days. You will be able to learn more about the degree, the School of Sociology, Politics And International Studies, and the wider Faculty of Social Sciences and Law; as well as exploring the University campus and the city of Bristol. We will normally give you a choice of dates to visit. We do not normally expect international applicants to attend a visit day unless you are resident in the UK (for instance, at school here) however we encourage you to attend wherever possible.

### **1.4. Correspondence with applicants**

We will send all correspondence relating to your application by email.

We will acknowledge receipt of your application by email on receipt (starting in mid-September), to establish contact and tell you about the process to be followed.

We will then tell you whether your application has been successful or unsuccessful, or inform you that your application has been assessed and put on 'Hold' pending a decision later in the cycle.

If you submitted your application by 15<sup>th</sup> January then the final deadline by which you will receive a decision is 7<sup>th</sup> May. We make most decisions well before that date. We monitor the number of offers we make carefully and hold some applications until later in the cycle.

## 2. Criteria for assessing applicants

To assess an application we need:

- Your 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 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 from the [International Office](#).

Where an 'essay based subject' is required, the following subjects are acceptable : Anthropology; Archaeology; Classical Civilisation; Classics; Drama; Economics; English Language; English Literature; Environmental Studies; Film; Geography; Government and Politics; Health and Social Care; History; History of Art; Law; Media Studies; Philosophy; Psychology; Religious Studies; Social Care; Social Policy; Sociology; Philosophy; Politics; Theatre Studies.

All applications must be submitted through UCAS or Common Application; we do not consider any direct applications.

Applications that are received on time are guaranteed equal consideration.

### 2.2. Additional academic criteria

We are interested in academic potential rather than simply academic attainment so far. We will draw on both actual and predicted attainment, your educational context, along with information in both your personal statement and your academic reference in assessing your potential.

If you have not previously studied social science subjects, you should indicate in your personal statement how your chosen A-level (or equivalent) studies are relevant to the particular degree and/or explain why you are choosing to take a different academic direction for your degree.

We do not count A-levels in General Studies or Critical Thinking in our assessment, nor do they count towards meeting our entrance requirements.

### **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 look for:

- Evidence of individual engagement with the chosen course of study, as well as empirical evidence of a commitment to the subject that goes beyond the A-level (or equivalent) syllabus;
- Evidence of independent, critical engagement with the themes and controversies that underpin the discipline (ie what specifically is it that enthuses you about the debates you engage with, the books you read and the ideas you discuss?);
- A sense of the individual – what interests you and why;
- Additional hobbies, interests and activities.

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 germane to our methods of teaching and areas of expertise.

### **2.4. Reference criteria**

We will use your reference for information about your motivation, ability to work independently, and powers of analysis and expression. If your referee believes that your performance does not reflect your ability, due to educational context and/or special circumstances, you should complete an extenuating circumstances form at [bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/](http://bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/). We do not consider extenuating circumstances without this form.

References should ideally be from your school or college, from an academic tutor confirming your potential to study social sciences 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, a positive attitude towards studies and any circumstances that may have had an impact on exam performance. The reference should also provide evidence of your interest in, and commitment to, the field of social science, and details of your extra-curricular activities and responsibilities which are relevant to the chosen course or career aims.

Where an academic reference is genuinely not possible (for instance, for mature applicants), a non-academic reference is acceptable. This should confirm any relevant experience you may have, explaining how that experience may indicate your potential for study at degree level and, if appropriate, your suitability for studying social science.

### **2.5. Interview**

For these courses, we do not routinely interview applicants. In the majority of cases, admissions decisions will be made on the basis of the application information alone. In exceptional circumstances where an interview is deemed necessary, it will be conducted by two people, with at least one trained in fair and effective recruitment, and undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

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;
- Your standard of spoken English;
- Appropriateness of the Bristol course in relation to your 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;
- Positions of responsibility held;
- Other relevant skills.

## **2.6. Mature applicants**

We welcome mature applicants, and assess such applications holistically, taking into account factors such as relevant work experience and personal circumstances that may have interrupted or prevented previous degree level study. Evidence of relevant recent study and examinations undertaken within the last 5 years is expected. See “9. Contextual information”, and “4.4 Extenuating Circumstances” below.

## **2.7. International applicants**

International applicants will be subject to the criteria as detailed here:

[bristol.ac.uk/international/countries](http://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**

You need to demonstrate that you have sufficient ability to understand and express yourself in both spoken and written English in order to benefit fully from your degree course.

You can find the English Language requirements for each course in the [undergraduate course finder](#). They are explained at [bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements](http://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.

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 state 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 applies from a school which 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 two grades 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. Applicants not currently attending school must have been in full-time education in one of the following schools in the academic year 15/16:

### [Contextual Offer Schools](#)

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).

## **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](#).

Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will be made equivalent to the published A-level offer. Offer conditions may specify achievement in subjects most appropriate to the course of study (usually essay-based subjects appropriate to study in the social sciences).

### **3.2 Aspirational Offers**

We recognise that some applicants may eventually achieve higher than their predicted grades, and so we may also make offers to those who are predicted to achieve one grade below the entry requirements (as long as this is in a non-specified subject). Any such offer would however be at the level of our typical offer conditions.

### **3.3 Alternative Offers**

If you do not meet our admissions requirements or are considered unsuitable 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 that an offer for another course at Bristol will automatically be made.

## 4. Other

### 4.1. Deferred applications

We will consider applications for deferred entry. However you 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

We are happy to consider applicants who have retaken or are retaking existing qualifications.

### 4.3. Transfers

While it is occasionally possible for University of Bristol students to change degree courses at the end of the first year (either to Joint Honours or Single Honours), applicants should note that there is no automatic right to do so. Such decisions are entirely at the discretion of the department, and may depend on the availability of places.

The School may occasionally allow a student from another institution or University to transfer into the second year of a course at the University of Bristol. Applications should be made in the usual way through UCAS with the 'point of entry' as Year Two, and reasons for the proposed transfer clearly stated in the Personal Statement.

The factors that we take into account when making a decision about a transfer are academic merit as well as the availability of places in any particular year cohort. If our degree courses are full, our policy is that we will not allow any transfers at all.

### 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/](http://bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/)) to Undergraduate Admissions.

We will of course treat the information provided on the form confidentially, and it will help us to assess accurately your academic performance in light of your situation.

### 4.5. Policies

All applications are considered in accordance with our [Admissions policies and procedures](#).

We are committed to following 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](#).

If you believe that the University admissions principles and procedures have been inconsistently or incorrectly applied, these complaints procedures provide a mechanism for objective review.

#### **4.6. Additional information**

We 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 were narrowly missed.

If offer holders do not meet the terms of their offer when exam results are released they may be considered as 'near miss candidates'. 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](mailto:choosebristol-ug@bristol.ac.uk) or +44 (0)117 8154.