

Admissions Policy for Displaced Applicants

1 Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The City of Bristol is proud to be a [City of Sanctuary](#), the University of Bristol is incredibly proud to be part of this initiative and has separately been accredited as a [University of Sanctuary](#) alongside the City of Bristol.
- 1.2 As a University of Sanctuary we recognise the unique challenges faced by displaced individuals and are committed to supporting them through the admissions process. This policy outlines reasonable adjustments to accommodate displaced applicants while upholding academic standards and complying with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations.
- 1.3 This policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught applicants who may be unable to provide standard documentation due to displacement.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this policy, a **displaced applicant** is defined as an individual forced to leave their home due to conflict, persecution, environmental disaster, or other life-threatening situations. This includes those who have crossed borders and those displaced within their own country.
- 1.5 Applicants considered under this policy remain subject to all other admissions policies, student agreements, and regulations. This policy provides additional support and flexibility to address displaced applicants' unique needs, while upholding the University's academic standards and regulatory commitments.
- 1.6 The University's approach to supporting displaced applicants is centered around our commitments as a University of Sanctuary using the following principles:
 - **Fairness and Inclusivity:** Ensuring fair access to education for displaced applicants, despite disruptions to prior academic experiences.
 - **Flexibility:** Adapting admissions procedures to assess academic potential and English proficiency where standard documentation is unavailable.
 - **Support:** Providing dedicated guidance and resources throughout the admissions process.
 - **Academic Integrity:** Maintaining academic standards and UKVI compliance while offering flexibility.

2 Support with Applications

- 2.1 Displaced applicants will be assigned a dedicated contact within the University's admissions team. This contact will provide support throughout the application process, offering advice and guidance, and signposting additional services where relevant.
- 2.2 The University will assess each applicant's case individually and apply flexibility where possible. In cases where alternative assessments are required, such as interviews or written tests, applicants will receive clear information and advice on how to prepare.
- 2.3 The University will offer flexibility in communication methods to accommodate applicants facing challenges, such as unreliable internet access or difficulty meeting deadlines. We will provide:
 1. Telephone support and postal submission of documents where necessary.
 2. Extended deadlines for document submission, where appropriate.

3 Application Process

- 3.1 Wherever possible, applicants should apply for their course of study in the usual way. Applicants can find more information on our web pages for [how to apply for undergraduate courses](#) and [how to apply for postgraduate study](#).
- 3.2 Applicants who wish to be considered under this policy must [complete and submit the displaced applicant form](#). Applicants may also be required to provide additional documentation to support their application.
- 3.3 Admissions staff will consult reputable global monitoring agencies (e.g., the UN, World Bank, International Crisis Group, Refugee Council) to verify the applicant's circumstances.
- 3.4 We recognise that some applicants may have difficulty completing the usual application process and may need further support to begin the application process. In such cases applicants should contact the University Enquiries team, who will identify a member of the admissions team to provide further support in the submission of your application.

4 Deadlines and Flexibility

- 4.1 The University is committed to providing flexibility around deadlines for displaced applicants throughout the admissions process. Some deadlines are set by external providers, such as UCAS, and are beyond our direct control. This may limit the adjustments we can offer but we will do our best to assist applicants in navigating application timelines wherever possible. Applicants should inform their dedicated admissions contact as early as possible if they need flexibility with any deadlines, so that we can work towards an appropriate and practical timeline in light of the circumstances.
- 4.2 We understand the urgency of securing funding for displaced applicants and will work to expedite decisions for those with pending scholarship or funding deadlines. Applicants should inform their admissions contact of any relevant deadlines as soon as possible, to allow us to accommodate these deadlines and ensure timely decisions. While we will make every effort to accommodate these needs, we cannot guarantee expedited processing if notified too late in the process.

- 4.3 While we strive to support displaced applicants with flexibility, certain situations, such as the final arrival date for starting a course, may require adherence to firm deadlines. We will provide leniency wherever possible, but some firm deadlines will be necessary to ensure applicants have sufficient time to arrive, settle in, and fully engage with their studies, helping to prevent any disadvantages from a delayed start.

5 Fees and Funding

- 5.1 The University recognises that displaced applicants often face significant financial barriers. To help address these challenges, we offer a range of [funding opportunities](#), including [Sanctuary Scholarships](#), which can assist with covering tuition fees and living costs. Applicants are encouraged to explore these options on our website for further guidance on eligibility and the application process. Applicants are also encouraged to view our [Student Finance](#) information pages for useful advice and guidance.
- 5.2 Applicants covered under this policy will have their fee status assessed according to the criteria outlined in current UK government regulations. This assessment determines whether an applicant qualifies as a home or international fee payer, based on national guidelines. More information about these criteria is available on the [UKCISA website](#).
- 5.3 Applicants covered by this policy who are applying for Postgraduate Taught courses are exempt from paying University application fees. Details on how to ensure the fee waiver is applied correctly can be found in the University's [Application Fee Policy](#).
- 5.4 Application fees charged by external service providers, such as UCAS, are outside the University's control, and we are unable to waive or adjust these fees. However, we encourage applicants to reach out to their dedicated admissions contact for guidance on any concerns related to application fees.

6 Academic Requirements and Documentation

- 6.1 The University is committed to ensuring that all students have the skills and experience necessary to succeed on their chosen course. We will assess each application individually and make reasonable adjustments for applicants who are unable to provide complete, official copies of their qualifications, whilst still maintaining academic integrity.
- 6.2 Where applicants are unable to provide complete official academic documentation due to displacement, the University will take all reasonable steps to accept alternative evidence, such as:
- Partial academic records that give a good indication of the applicant's academic ability and trajectory towards a final grade that is in line with our typical academic entry requirements.
 - Interviews or other assessments carried out by the University of Bristol to gauge academic ability and preparedness for undertaking degree level study.
 - Highly Likely to Complete letters from the awarding institution.
 - Letters of recommendation from the awarding institution or a member of its academic staff.
- 6.3 As a licensed sponsor of international students, the University must comply with UKVI regulations. While we are committed to supporting applicants through flexible admissions

processes, all students who will require a student visa to undertake their studies must ultimately meet visa sponsorship requirements. The University will make every effort to support applicants, but if visa requirements or academic standards cannot be satisfactorily met, we may not be able to confirm a place.

7 English Language Requirements and Documentation

- 7.1 The University is committed to ensuring that all students possess the language skills necessary to succeed academically. This requires maintaining a balance between offering flexibility to displaced applicants and upholding the language proficiency standards necessary for success.
- 7.2 In cases where an applicant is having difficulty providing evidence to show that they meet the English language profile for their course of study, the University will aim to apply flexibility within the parameters of the University's established [English language profiles](#).
- 7.3 A combination of additional assessments may be required to ensure applicants are adequately prepared for university-level study, including:
 - Considering existing English language qualifications, including those that may have expired or fall slightly below the requirements outlined in the University's English language profiles.
 - Conducting internal assessments to evaluate language proficiency, utilising the expertise of academic staff at the University and the Centre for Academic Language and Development
 - Making offers conditional on applicants enrolling in pre-sessional English courses or support programs, if necessary.
- 7.4 In all cases where an applicant will require a Student visa to undertake their studies, the University must comply with UKVI regulations. Please see section 10 for more information about Student visas.

8 Academic References

- 8.1 Applicants covered by this policy are not required to submit academic references as part of their application. However, in cases where academic records are incomplete or unavailable, academic references may be suggested as an alternative way to evidence the applicant's academic ability.
- 8.2 If required, applicants may provide a reference from a previous academic institution or a member of its academic staff who is familiar with their academic work. The reference should provide insight into the applicant's academic potential and preparedness for degree-level study.
- 8.3 The University will offer guidance to applicants on how to obtain an academic reference if this is deemed beneficial, but will only request such references where it provides a reasonable and practical way to support the application.

9 Decision Making and Approval

9.1 Admissions decisions for applicants who have been displaced will be made following a thorough review involving consultation with key University staff. The decision-making process will include:

- Admissions Team: To ensure consistency and adherence to University policies, particularly around alternative assessments and documentation.
- Academic Staff for the Course Applied For: To ensure the applicant has the academic background and potential to succeed in the chosen program.
- Student Visas Team (Compliance): To ensure all UKVI student sponsorship requirements are met (where applicable).

9.2 Approval will be based on the applicant's overall profile, including alternative evidence provided and the results of any additional assessments conducted. This collaborative process ensures that applicants are given the best possible chance to succeed, while maintaining the University's academic standards and regulatory obligations.

10 Student Visas

10.1 The University is committed to ensuring that all decisions for applicants requiring a Student visa comply fully with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations. As a licensed sponsor, the University must ensure that all visa compliance requirements are satisfied before issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).

10.2 Applicants should be aware that an offer of admission does not guarantee that the University will be able to issue a CAS. Specific visa compliance requirements, such as those related to academic documentation, English language proficiency, or financial evidence, must be met before a CAS can be produced. In some cases, these requirements may only become apparent after an offer of admission has been made.

10.3 The University is mindful of the potential impact of extended deadlines on visa processing times. Applicants should communicate any delays or challenges to their dedicated admissions contact as early as possible to minimize disruptions. Late submission of required documents may limit the time available to complete the visa application process.

10.4 Applicants applying for courses that require an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate should plan for additional processing time, as obtaining ATAS clearance can take several weeks. The University will support applicants through this process but encourages early preparation to avoid delays.

10.5 While the University will provide guidance and support throughout the visa application process, it remains the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all visa and ATAS requirements are met in time to begin their studies.

11 Monitoring, Review, and Transparency

11.1 The University is committed to applying this policy consistently and fairly. All admissions staff will receive training on the policy's implementation, with a particular focus on understanding the unique circumstances faced by displaced applicants.

- 11.2 The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and aligned with UKVI requirements and the University's academic standards. We will monitor the outcomes of students admitted under this policy to evaluate its effectiveness and make necessary improvements.