

Admissions Policy for Pre Degree entry in academic year 2026/27

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1 Strategic Vision

1.1 Our vision for Arts University Plymouth is a new kind of arts university for the 21st century, preparing graduates who are uniquely placed to provide creative solutions to the complex global challenges of our times.

We will champion our people, place and pedagogy at the heart of our mission, delivering sustainable growth and impactful change in terms of creative economies, civic engagement and cultural ambition in Plymouth and the wider region.

We will enhance our reputation as a catalyst for individual, societal and ecological transformation, delivering innovative and distinctive learning, teaching and research through its interdisciplinary ecosystem of materials, processes, technologies and knowledge exchange.

1.2 Arts University Plymouth has set a vision towards 2030 based upon sustainable growth, solution focused teaching and research, and a commitment to impactful social justice and ecological change through its people, culture and place. Our strategy [*Creative Education for a Changing World*](#) will ensure that our work is energised and designed to meet the ambitions of its students and staff while acknowledging the shifting realm of creativity through new technologies and the workplaces of tomorrow.

1.3 Our strategy is built upon three pillars, ***Creative Endeavour***, ***Sustainable Futures***, and ***People & Place***. Through this, we have set a critical path towards a holistic and embedded pedagogical approach under the title *Teaching for our Time*, that will guide all of our creative endeavours. We believe that authenticity, fulfilment and kindness are indexical qualities in the process of thinking, making and living.

1.4 The University is committed to:

- creating a student body that is balanced and diverse in terms of cultural background and experience
- providing fair and equal access to all prospective students who are able to demonstrate the potential to benefit from and contribute to a programme of study; and the potential to complete a chosen programme of study successfully, regardless of background
- providing a professional admissions service with clear, fair and consistently applied policies and procedures.

2 About this Policy

2.1 This policy covers all Pre Degree (Further Education) admissions.

2.2 The policy is also designed to meet the requirements of the ESFA section 3 below) and Ofsted requirements. The contents list follows:

3 Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

3.1 Arts University Plymouth is committed to the regulatory responsibilities to the ESFA:

- adoption of safer recruitment procedures
- recruit eligible learners onto its services from the Services Start Date (new learners must not be recruited after 31st July 2026)
- the recruitment must comply with the 16-19 Education Funding Regulations
- all learners must be enrolled on a Study Programme.

3.2 Furthermore:

- 16-19 Education covers the following groups of young people who are:
 - a. Aged 16 to 19;
 - b. Aged 19 to 24 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

4 Governance

4.1 The Admissions Policies at Arts University Plymouth are the result of collaboration from across the University and is reviewed annually with approval by the Academic Board.

5 Individual responsibilities

5.1 For pre-degree courses applications are accepted directly to the University through its [website](#) (or on paper by request contacting the Admissions Office by email - admissions@aup.ac.uk or telephone (01752 203400/474)).

5.2 All applicants are assessed as individuals and are given equal opportunity to demonstrate relevant skills and provide supporting information where required on the relevant application form.

5.3 AUP is committed to ensuring that the admissions process provides fair and equal consideration for applicants who apply by the relevant closing dates, and for late applicants, provided places remain available.

5.4 The **Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions** is responsible for:

- advising senior management on matters relating to admissions
- coordinating annual review of the Admissions Policy
- reviewing admissions procedures to ensure they enable the University to achieve strategic goals and specific objectives

- promoting good practice and consistency
- ensuring all staff involved with the admissions process are thoroughly familiar with requirements and administrative procedures.

5.5 The **Admissions & International Manager / Admissions Office** is responsible for:

- implementing the University's admissions procedure and offer-making protocol
- processing applications and the decisions made by course areas
- disseminating relevant information to courses
- communicating with applicants during the admissions process (with support from the wider Brand directorate).

5.6 The **International Recruitment Manager** is responsible for:

- implementing the University's admissions procedure and offer-making protocol for all international applicants
- assisting the Admissions team to process applications and decisions made by programme areas for international applicants
- issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) (this is a unique number which confirms an international applicant has been accepted on a course of study in the UK - it is an electronic document generated using the Home Office's system and is essential in order to make a successful Student visa application.
- communicating with external agents and partners that deal with potential applicants

5.7 The **Learning Support Coordinator** is responsible for communicating with applicants when a disability has been disclosed and to arrange a transition (from school) meeting for those who have SEN status or have an EHCP.

5.8 The **Deputy Vice-Chancellor** has overall responsibility for student recruitment and admissions, which includes determining entry criteria and assessment procedures, in conjunction with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and wider Vice-Chancellor's Executive, Head of Pre Degree, and Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions, before approval by the Academic Board.

5.9 **Pre degree teaching staff** have responsibility for conducting discussions with applicants where necessary. It is this member of staff who assesses applicants for their potential to undertake the course of study successfully, based on the quality of their work, application including references, achievements to date and/or predicted achievements, and qualities for potential studentship. The member of academic / teaching staff advises the Admissions Office of the recommendation regarding an offer for the candidate. Staff are also responsible for implementing reasonable adjustments where required, in consultation with the Learning Support Coordinator.

5.10 The **Admissions Office** ensures compliance with the offer-making protocol and consistency between recommendation and records from discussions. Admissions staff are responsible for communicating the response formally to candidates.

5.11 All **academic staff and administrative support staff** involved in the process of admissions take responsibility for:

- providing accurate and relevant information for applicants and prospective applicants
- assessing applicants and making offers
- making reasonable local adjustments aimed at ensuring that individual disabled applicants have full access to the admissions process in conjunction with the University's [Learning and Disability Policy](#) and in liaison with appropriate Student Support staff
- ensuring full compliance with this Admissions Policy and procedures including fairness and consistency.

6 Information to applicants; commitment to fairness, consistency and transparency

6.1 The University website and printed publications provides clear information on the entry criteria. The University publishes this Admissions Policy on its [website study page](#). Information provided is intended to give potential applicants specific information to help them make informed decisions about applications for courses. Information available on this page and linked pages for applicants includes:

- entry requirements which include the details of what is required for entry, such as qualifications, grades, and application and offer-making process
- details of Open Days and other relevant events e.g. applicant experience days
- advice and guidance on accommodation, finance and support services
- course specific guidance including information on the application and offer process, advice about what work could be shown, features of each programme and any particular skills and competences applicants need for the course of study
- information on any additional costs that may be incurred e.g. materials and trips
- a Welcome Pack, provided to new applicants
- Terms and Conditions for students (applicant journey page).

7 Offer Process

7.1 Arts University Plymouth will offer an applicant a place providing certain conditions are met before enrolment on the course. Usually conditions are based on the completion of outstanding qualifications.

7.2 Each offer is specific to the applicant's individual qualifications and circumstances. The University reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants who do not meet the terms of their offer.

7.3 The Admissions Office team will process all applications as quickly as possible, aiming to provide a decision within **ten days** after receiving the applicant's portfolio. For decisions based purely on the application a decision will usually be made within five working days when possible.

7.4 An offer letter is then sent (electronically or by post) from the Admissions Office to the applicant. This letter states whether the candidate has been successful (or not), and if so whether the offer is unconditional or conditional, together with the conditions of the offer if the latter. Details of the programme / course, start and end date are included, as are the University terms and conditions for students.

7.5 The applicant will need to choose whether to accept or decline the offer via communication with the Admissions Office.

8 Qualifications for entry

8.1 The entry requirement for each course is reviewed annually by the Academic Board.

- these are expressed in terms of overall numbers of GCSE passes at grade 4 or above as well as achievement at grade 4 or above in specific subjects where appropriate;
- in addition to these for the Foundation Diploma there are also minimum requirements for appropriate Level 3 qualifications.
- If not already held (Grade 4 or above) there will be a mandatory requirement for students to attend Mathematics and English GCSE lessons as part of both FAD and Extended Diploma.

8.2 The entry requirements are provided in the University prospectus and on the University website. The most up-to-date information will be found online.

9 Proficiency in English Language

9.1 Teaching and assessment will take place in English, therefore applicants must be proficient in the use of English both in writing and speech. Applicants for whom English is not their first language will be required to demonstrate their proficiency in written and spoken English in order to gain entry to enrol on a course.

9.2 Any offer made will include the condition of successful completion of an English proficiency test to a required minimum threshold stated in the published entry requirements. [Specific information for international applicants](#) is provided on the University website including details of recognised English proficiency qualifications.

10 Offer conditions and assessments

10.1 The applicant's place at the University will be subject to them meeting any offer conditions that we specify and communicate in writing such as obtaining particular qualifications and/or satisfying all necessary legal and other requirements to study with us e.g. immigration clearance. Their place is also conditional upon them registering at the start of their course.

10.2 If an applicant applies to Pre-Degree whilst not being able to achieve the entry requirements through home study, illness or for any other reason, the University will require Pre-Degree applicants to take part in a Diagnostic Assessment. This assessment will be used as a condition of entry to determine if applicants without entry criteria are suitable to be offered a place to study on the basis that an applicant without appropriate entry conditions is likely to succeed whilst studying in a Level 3 qualification & study programme.

10.3 Should the diagnostic assessment provide information to communicate that the applicant will struggle to work to the levels required for our Level 3 qualification (plus the requirements to study for qualifications in English and Maths) the University will offer some advice and guidance with additional support to make sure the applicant is sign-posted to the most appropriate support such as the CSW Group, the Zone or onto a Level 1 or 2 study programme with an alternative provider to ensure that they are supported to continue their studies at the most appropriate level in the most appropriate setting.

10.4 Pre-Degree is not able to accept applications from students who are under 16 years of age at the point of enrolment.

11 Principles and procedures

11.1 In order to ensure consistency and fairness, the general principles and procedures set out below must be followed by all staff involved in the admissions process.

11.2 Each application will be treated individually and a range of criteria from the application form will be taken into account to identify the applicant's ability to meet the demands of the course. This may include but is not limited to:

- past academic performance
- previous institution
- school/college/employer reference
- predicted qualifications/grades
- commitment, motivation and potential
- relevant experience
- match between applicants and course
- examples of current work and areas of interest

11.3 Offers made to Pre Degree applicants will include a requirement to attend an interview with academic / teaching staff as part of accompanying conditions to the offer, for to discuss their interests and experience, with examples of work included wherever possible.

11.4 All decisions are processed on the University's Student Records System (currently MyData / SoMIS).

11.5 Applicants must be able to demonstrate the necessary English Language proficiency level to succeed on their chosen programme or course of study.

12 Fair Access and equality

12.1 Allowance shall be made for any applicant with verified exceptional circumstances or who has faced difficult challenges, where these are made known to the University (e.g. illness, death of a parent, poverty, disrupted education, refugee status, care experienced / care leaver, estranged from immediate family, service family). It may be possible to offer a place to an applicant whose academic performance may have been affected by such circumstances and who might otherwise have been expected to have achieved higher grades. The applicant would be recommended to contact the LSC prior to enrolling.

12.2 The application process is consistent with the Equality Act. Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, race, religion or ethnic background, sex or sexual orientation.

13 Disabilities

13.1 Consideration of applications from students who declare a disability is based on the same criteria and principles as for other applicants; any information provided or known regarding an applicant's disability is not used in the academic decision making process.

13.2 If applicants or students have a disability or other support need they are strongly encouraged to disclose this to the Learning Support Coordinator on application, so that appropriate support can be sought.

13.3 If an applicant or student decides not to disclose a disability or to limit that disclosure, we will do our best to help with support but may not be able to access the full range of support that could be available.

13.4 Students with an EHC Plan (Education Health and Care Plan) will receive a support package tailored to their individual needs provided early contact is made in advance of enrolment with the Pre-Degree Learning Support Coordinator to ensure the support can be put in place prior to the start of the course.

13.5 A consultation will be completed with the issuing local authority (Plymouth / Devon / South Hams Councils etc.) for EHCPs to ensure that outcomes within the EHCP and need can be met, along with any agreed funding and to ensure that AUP is named in the EHCP as the education placement.

13.6 For further advice regarding EHCP support for students with disabilities or any information regarding access to University health, wellbeing and counselling services, please refer to the information on our website or email Student Support (predegree_studentsupport@aup.ac.uk).

14. Reasonable adjustments

14.1 Where possible, we provide adjustments to ensure that no student is unfairly disadvantaged or advantaged. Inclusion is embedded into the design of all Pre-Degree courses. We also have an anticipatory duty to act in advance and make adjustments so as to remove any disadvantage that might reasonably be foreseen as likely to affect students.

14.2 Inclusive education involves responding positively to each student's unique learning profile, including students with diverse learning needs. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure that all reasonable adjustments are appropriate, sustainable and actionable. Therefore, It is important that we have as much information at the beginning of the academic year as possible to ensure that course teams and support staff are able to provide support and flexibility where necessary.

14.3 There are no assumptions about what is reasonable, rather the consideration of whether an adjustment is 'reasonable' is measured against:

- The effectiveness of the adjustment in preventing the disadvantage
- The extent to which it is practicable for the University to make the adjustment
- The cost and availability of resources including external assistance and finance
- The extent to which making the adjustment would disrupt the University's activities.

14.4 The University reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments decisions based on what can reasonably be provided whilst also maximising the equitable nature of the provision for all students.

14.5 There may be some occasions where the request made isn't assessed as reasonable by the University, for example because of cost implications, to make the adjustment would have a detrimental impact on other students or where the reasonable adjustment request is made as a result of late disclosure of needs.

14.6 Please be aware that if applicants decide not to disclose learning needs or to limit that disclosure, we will do our best to help but may not be able to provide the full range of reasonable adjustments support that could be available.

14.7 If applicants or students have any reasonable adjustment requests, or other support needs they are strongly encouraged to disclose this to our Learning Support Coordinator / Student Support team. (predegree_studentsupport@aup.ac.uk). Our [Learning & Disability Support Policy](#) also applies.

15 Criminal convictions

15.1 The University does not wish to create unnecessary barriers for young people with criminal records from taking advantage of the opportunities provided by further education and will not ask students to declare any previous spent convictions.

15.2 However, the University has a duty to ensure that it provides a safe environment for its staff, students and other stakeholders, while being able to provide appropriate guidance and support for anyone with an unspent criminal conviction or who is involved in ongoing criminal proceedings.

15.3 Therefore, potential students who have an **unspent conviction** or **ongoing or pending criminal proceeding** that could result in a **relevant** criminal conviction¹, or who are currently subject to a **Sexual Harm Prevention Order** will be asked to disclose this as part of the enrolment and registration process. The University will make a decision on whether to proceed with registration and if so on how best to support the prospective student.

15.4 Therefore, any potential students with ongoing proceedings, unspent convictions for a relevant offence or who are currently subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order **must** advise the Admissions Office before enrolment who will pass the information onto the relevant staff members such as the Head of Pre Degree. Disclosure of any convictions/proceedings will be dealt with in strict confidence and on a need-to-know basis. Failure to disclose this information may result in a formal Stage 3 intervention if discovered or disclosed at a later date, with the potential for suspension or permanent exclusion.

15.5 The [Applicant Guidance - Criminal Convictions / Sexual Harm Prevention Orders](#) provides more information.

16 Student accommodation

16.1 Arts University Plymouth does not accept applications from students who are **under the age of 18** and who wish to study **whilst also living in Student accommodation**.

¹ Relevant criminal convictions are only those convictions for offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, and convictions for offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking.

16.2 All Pre-Degree students who are **under the age of 18** must be living with parents or a legal guardian.

16.3 In a situation where a Pre-Degree student who is **under the age of 18** moves from living with Parents or a Legal Guardian into Student Accommodation, the University will **not** take on legal responsibility that is, will not act *in loco parentis*. The University reserves the right to withdraw or amend our offer or terminate a student's registration according to the circumstances of accommodation.

16.4 If a situation arises that a Pre-Degree student who is **under the age of 18** is living outside the family home, for example with a grandparent or partner, the Head of Pre Degree will require a written statement from parents or legal guardians, to communicate that they approve of this arrangement and take full responsibility for the welfare of their child.

16.5 For Pre-Degree applicants who are **over the age of 18** and wish to live in student accommodation whilst studying at Arts University Plymouth, [Home for Students](#) are our recommended accommodation partners. They provide a variety of housing options for our students, with properties ideally located around the campus and surrounding area, so students only ever have a short walk to get to the campus.

16.6 Please click the link below to the Arts University Plymouth accommodation page on our website <https://www.aup.ac.uk/student-life/accommodation>.

16.7 Pre-Degree students who have to temporarily move out of the family home and into supported accommodation, such as the [Plymouth Foyer](#) will continue to be supported on an individual and ongoing basis.

17 Student finance and bursaries

17.1 Arts University Plymouth is committed to ensuring Further Education is accessible and affordable for all, therefore we offer a variety of bursaries to help Pre-Degree students with their study costs.

17.2 If an applicant or student has a net annual household income of £30,000 or less, or any exceptional circumstances, then they may be eligible for one of our Pre-Degree bursaries. We offer bursaries to support travel expenses, free meals, residential relocation or vulnerable students.

17.3 The Bursary Scheme for 2026/27 is planned to open at the beginning of July 2026, at which point all applicants and students due to return for a second year of study will be contacted via email.

17.4 Applicants and students can find full details regarding fees, finance and funding, including bursary guidance and eligibility criteria, on our [website](#).

18 Changes to Courses

18.1 Should there be any significant changes to a course between opening for applications and enrolment, such as a course no longer running or a change of course title, applicants will be notified of this as soon as possible by the Recruitment and Admissions team between the time the offer is made and enrolment.

19 Requests for Withdrawal

18.1 Applicants who wish to withdraw after an offer has been made must contact admissions@aup.ac.uk. An application may be withdrawn either by the applicant or by the University. An applicant may be withdrawn if they persistently fail to engage with requests for further information without making contact with the University.

20 Personal feedback requests

20.1 Should an applicant require feedback, this will be provided upon receipt of a written, signed request to the Admissions Manager. The feedback will be based on information held on the applicant.

21 Applicant responsibilities

21.1 Decisions to make an offer of a place to study in Pre-Degree at Arts University Plymouth are taken by the University in good faith after discussions with applicants, and on the basis that statements made in the application, including predicted grades are correct and appropriate.

21.2 If it is discovered that a false or misleading statement has been made or significant information has been omitted from an application of study the University reserves the right to withdraw or amend our offer or terminate a student's registration according to the circumstances.

21.3 It is the responsibility of applicants (and their parents/guardians) to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the University of any changes or corrections to original details. The University will follow its procedures regarding any fraudulent statements and omissions, and if such cases arise reserves the right to dismiss an application, withdraw an offer of a place, or revoke registration.

22 Complaints and Appeals

22.1 An applicant may appeal an **admission decision** made by the University when:

- the applicant believes the University has not followed its Admissions Policy and procedures

- the applicant has further relevant information in support of their application that was not provided during the original application process, and there were valid reasons why this information was not provided.

22.2 Furthermore an applicant may **appeal an admission decision** made by the University when:

- the applicant believes the University has not followed the process in the Applicant Guidance - Criminal Convictions / Sexual Harm Prevention Orders
- the applicant has further relevant information in support of their application, related to the conviction or SHPO / SRO that was not provided during the original application process or declaration and there were valid reasons why this information was not provided.

There is no right of appeal against an admission decision concerning matters of academic judgement regarding an applicant's suitability to study a programme.

22.3 Applicants wishing to appeal should contact the Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions as soon as possible and at the latest within **one month** of receipt of the original decision either by post (University address) or email admissions@aup.ac.uk setting out the grounds for their appeal.

22.4 Appeals will be acknowledged within 5 working days and a formal response will be made by the investigating officer, normally within 20 working days. The outcome of the appeal will be one of the following:

- to reject the appeal and uphold the original decision,
- to uphold the appeal and amend the decision, or
- to uphold the appeal and invite the applicant to a discussion.

22.5 Any complaints with regard to the University's **admissions process** (not the decision) should be directed to the Head of Student Recruitment & Admissions to be dealt with. If they are unable to resolve themselves they will inform the Head of Compliance & Quality Systems who manages student complaints. However, as the complainant will not be a student any complaint will be dealt with as if from a member of the public (see [Complaint Guidance for Members of the Public](#)) and therefore it should be noted that there will be no option to refer any complaint decision to a higher authority such as a student ombudsman or regulator.

23 Data Protection

23.1 The University operates in full compliance with the Data Protection Act / UK GDPR. All applicants' details are handled and stored securely in electronic form within the University. Any enquiries are retained for no longer than two years.

23.2 Once a student is enrolled, limited personal data (name, programme and results/grades are retained securely for six years after last contact, usually graduation). The University will only share information with third parties where consent is provided to do so, or where it is necessary for us to help safeguard the health and safety of the applicant, or the health and safety of others, in accordance with the [Data Protection Policy](#) and relevant Privacy Statements.

23.3 The University will generally communicate with students directly and will involve parents only for those students who are under 18.

24 Communications

24.1 The University will send regular updates to enquirers and applicants with relevant information. These will generally be emails from the Recruitment and Admissions team, and may contain information on forthcoming events e.g. Open Days as well as information designed to support potential students e.g. advice on the admission process and starting the course.

24.2 Receipt of this information is optional, but applicants should be aware that they will still receive communications about the status of their application. The University may also send general updates about the application cycle to parents who have opted in to receive these communications through contact at events such as Open Days. These will not contain information about individual students.

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Related Statutes, Ordinances, & General Regulations	• Data Protection Act / UK GDPR • ESFA Regulatory Responsibilities
Related policies:	• Admissions Policy for HE Entry • Data Protection Policy • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy • Learning and Disability Support Policy (SENCO Policy)
Related procedures	• Procedure for Closing or Suspending Pre Degree Courses
Related information:	• Privacy Statements
Policy owner and Lead contacts:	Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions Email: sallen@aup.ac.uk / jwright@aup.ac.uk plus input from other Heads and staff members