UCEM Code of Practice

Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning

UCEM Code of Practice
Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning – Higher Education (HE) programmes

Table of Contents

UCEM Code of Practice
Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning – Higher Education (HE) programmes

Introduction

This document represents UCEM's overarching policy on the admission of students and the recognition of prior learning for all Higher Education (HE) programmes of study.

In line with our core purpose to *'provide truly accessible and cost effective education, enabling students to enhance careers, increase professionalism and contribute to a better built environment'*, UCEM seeks to be effective in recognising the potential applicants have to succeed in their chosen programmes of study. The Admissions Policy operates to support students in this objective at each stage of the admissions process. UCEM is committed to delivering a high-quality service to all applicants through admissions processes that are reliable and fair, inclusive and accessible, transparent and appropriate, and applied consistently as outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (opens new window).

The aims of the policy are to ensure that:
- Applicants are treated fairly and consistently
- Applicants are reliably supported and guided through the application process
- Applicants are able to make appropriate, informed choices
- Students who are recruited are capable of succeeding in their chosen programme
- UCEM strategic objectives are recognised

1.   Widening Participation

Providing accessible education is at the heart of our core purpose and UCEM is committed to widening participation to achieve this. UCEM provide a range of flexible learning pathways that seek to attract a broad range of applicants and recognises the value of learning whether it occurs in Further or Higher Education or within the workplace. Full details can be found in our annual Access and Participation Plan (opens new window).

2.   Equality and Diversity

UCEM is committed to an inclusive admissions policy by providing transparent, fair and consistent practice for all individuals. No potential student will be excluded entry to any UCEM programme as a result of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. For more information, please see the Code of Practice chapter: Equality and Diversity (opens new window).

3.   Disability and specific learning needs

3.1   Applicants with disabilities or additional needs are welcomed by UCEM and are encouraged to disclose this information to UCEM in their application. Applicants who choose to disclose this information will benefit by being contacted by UCEM's Disability and Wellbeing Advisor to discuss what reasonable adjustments can be made and if additional support is required.

3.2   Applicants who choose not to disclose their disability or additional needs at the application stage can do so at any point during their studies.

3.3   Admission decisions and discussion of support needs are taken independently. Support needs do not influence admission decisions. However, if UCEM is unable to meet additional needs, or can only do so by compromising the learning experience, we will inform the applicant as soon as is reasonably practicable.

For more information please see our Code of Practice: Disability and Additional Needs (opens new window).

4. Criminal convictions

4.1 In line with UCEM's core purpose to provide truly accessible education we support applications from those with current i.e. unspent convictions, applicants on parole or those serving a sentence. However, applicants will need to consider how they will access learning materials which are delivered to students online via our Virtual Learning Environment and, if on an Apprenticeship programme, via the face-to-face workshops. This should be considered in conjunction with the expected workload and contact hours for the programme, as outlined in the relevant Programme Specification.

4.2 To ensure UCEM meets its safeguarding responsibilities to all students, applications from candidates with current convictions or on parole will be carefully considered by the Admissions Team and others, as appropriate. Such applicants must, upon request, provide details of the conviction.

4.3 UCEM reserves the right to refuse entry to any applicant with a current criminal conviction which may jeopardise the security, safety or reputation of the University College or its staff or students.

4.4 UCEM will ensure that any applicant who has disclosed information in relation to a criminal conviction, or is currently serving a sentence, is aware of the advice and support which UCEM can offer in relation to the proposed programme of study.

5. Age on entry

5.1 UCEM welcomes applicants from people of all ages. However, in the case of students commencing a programme before their 18th birthday we have an enhanced duty of care as these students are regarded as children under UK law.

5.2 Applications from under 18s will be carefully considered by the Programme Leader to ensure these students can be appropriately supported. The Programme Leader will consider what parental and employer support is available to the applicant for the duration of their studies. If the Programme Leader determines the applicant cannot be appropriately supported, they may decline to offer a place.

6. Admissions information

UCEM is committed to providing clear and accessible information to enable applicants to make appropriately informed choices and decisions at relevant stages of the application process. With regards to admissions information UCEM will:

- Ensure that key information such as entry requirements, application closing dates, and programme/module fees displayed online are accurate and up-to-date.

- Ensure that enquirers and applicants are able to access relevant policies via the UCEM website and on request.

- Ensure that if any significant changes are made to an advertised programme that the applicant is informed of the change and the options available to them as soon as possible as outlined in the Code of Practice: Information about Higher Education Provision.

7. Admissions requirements

7.1 Entry requirements are established in accordance with the individual programme requirements and validating and accrediting bodies. Entry requirements for all programmes, including recognition of prior learning, where appropriate, are approved by UCEM's Academic Board.

7.2 The admission of any student will be determined by reference to the standard entry requirements for the particular programme. Standard entry requirements are shown on the relevant programme page on the UCEM website and in the Programme Specification document.

7.3 Mature applicants (over 21 years) who do not meet the standard entry requirements but who are able to demonstrate relevant experience will be considered for non-standard entry. For more information please see section 12 *(Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admission)* below.

7.4 Where stipulated as part of the entry requirements, or when using section 12 *Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admission,* UCEM may use additional mechanisms to judge the eligibility of an applicant for a programme. This could include, for example, interviews, personal statements or statements of employer support.

7.5 UCEM welcomes students from all over the world and admits applicants with a wide range of international qualifications. UCEM will use independently published guidelines and rankings recognised within the United Kingdom higher education sector, such as UK NARIC when considering the equivalence of international qualifications.

7.6 Applicants for Apprenticeship programmes must meet the specific entry requirements for the Apprenticeship programmes. Currently Apprenticeships are not available to international students.

7.7 All teaching and assessment will take place in English. For this reason, all applicants must be competent in the English language and all programmes require at least GCSE English at Grade C, or an equivalent qualification. Applicants will need to submit evidence of meeting UCEM's minimum English language requirements (opens new window) before commencing their studies.

7.8 There may be supplementary entry requirements in the case of programmes accredited by Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies.

7.9 Where you must supply evidence, photocopies only (not originals) should be sent, certified by a professionally qualified person such as a member of RICS, CIOB, lawyer, police officer or doctor.

8. Responsibility of applicants

8.1   Applicants are expected to ensure they are familiar with this admissions policy.

8.2   If an offer is made which the applicant accepts, the applicant is expected to ensure they are familiar with all of UCEM's student policies, procedures, regulations and terms and conditions. These are available on the UCEM website and will be signposted to the applicant at the appropriate time.

8.3   It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide full and accurate information, with the appropriate supporting documentation, with an application for admission. Failure to provide this information will mean a decision on admission is either delayed or withheld altogether. UCEM will determine which information it needs to receive prior to making any decision on admission.

8.4   Applicants are required to notify the Admissions Office of any changes or corrections to their application. In light of additional information not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or in some cases withdrawn.

8.5   UCEM reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if it is found at a later stage that the applicant has submitted a fraudulent application.

8.6   UCEM reserves the right to take disciplinary action, in line with the Code of Practice Academic and Behavioural Conduct (opens new window), if it is found that an applicant who has become a student at UCEM submitted a fraudulent application.

9. How to apply

9.1   Applications for Accelerated Route (full-time) BSc programmes should be made via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) (opens new window).

9.2   Applications for standard route (part-time) undergraduate programmes and all postgraduate programmes should be made directly via UCEM's online application form (opens new window).

9.3   Applications for Apprenticeship programmes must be made by your employer. Please email admissions@ucem.ac.uk for guidance.

10. Application decisions

10.1   UCEM operates a centralised admissions service to ensure the delivery of consistent outcomes. Admissions decisions will be made on behalf of UCEM by designated staff within the Admissions Office. These decisions will be based on requirements agreed in consultation with academic staff and the Director of Admissions & Registration.

10.2   Applications for non-standard entry may be referred to the Programme Leader or the relevant Head of Subject for a decision. For more information please see section 12 (*Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admission*) below.

10.3   Applications for non-standard entry to Apprenticeship programmes may be referred to the Apprenticeship Delivery Manager for a decision. For more information please see section 12

(Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admission)
below.

10.4   If any information provided within a completed application form is absent or unclear, the Admissions Team will seek clarification from the applicant before an application decision is made. This will delay the time between application and offer.

10.5   Applicants applying via UCAS will receive their application decision directly from UCAS. Applicants can monitor the progress of their application via the UCAS Apply and Track service. Successful applicants will also receive formal notification from UCEM via email.

10.6   Applicants applying to UCEM directly will receive their application decision from the Admissions Team via email. Any offer of a place will include information on how to respond to the offer and will detail any conditions that must be met and the timescales for meeting these.

10.7   UCEM endeavour to ensure that non-Apprenticeship applicants applying directly, who submit a completed application form with the required supporting documentation, receive their offer decision within 10 working days. The time between application and offer may extend beyond 10 working days if further information is required for a decision to be reached. Apprenticeship application decisions may also extend beyond 10 working days.

10.8   Applicants applying via UCAS will receive their decision no later than the relevant "reply by date".

10.9   Where possible, unsuccessful applicants will be considered for suitable alterative programmes and will be informed of any alternative offers in their decision email.

11.   *Procedure for recognition of prior learning and credit transfer*

11.1   Credit transfer is where UCEM recognises prior learning at higher education level and allows that credit to count towards module exemption on a UCEM programme. The prior learning may either be learning which has led to award of credit at another institution in line with the UK Qualifications Framework or which has not led to credits awarded not in line with the UK Qualifications Framework, such as international qualifications and professional qualifications/ membership.

11.2   Applicants wishing to apply for credit transfer must indicate their intention in the exemption section of the application form.

11.3   Applicants with qualifications that have been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board will be offered credit transfer as per the exemption arrangements in place for the intake they are seeking admission to. Exemption arrangements are updated regularly and changes to the exemptions offered to students cannot be applied retrospectively. Applicants can request information on the exemption arrangements in place for their intake by emailing admissions@ucem.ac.uk.

11.4   Applications for credit transfer based on qualifications that have not been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board will be assessed on a case by case basis by the Programme Leader. In these cases, the prospective student's application must be accompanied by evidence to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes for the modules against which exemption is being sought. Normally, this evidence should consist of corroborative documentation such as transcripts and/or award certificates. However,

UCEM may request submission of syllabus details for particular modules in order to clarify content and learning outcomes.

11.5   Once assessed by the Programme Leader, applications for credit transfer based on qualifications that have not been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board must be approved by the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Panel. The Panel meets weekly. Decisions regarding credit transfer based on qualifications that have not been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board cannot be communicated to applicants until approved by the RPL Panel. Applicants will be notified that their application is being reviewed by the RPL Panel via email.

11.6   Decisions with regard to applications for exemption generally are delegated to the Admissions Team in consultation with the Programme Leader and/or Head of Subject, working within the standard entry requirements for the programme. In reaching a decision, reference will be made to specific academic requirements relating to the programme in question, any requirements stipulated by accrediting professional bodies and the documentary evidence provided by the candidate. Exemptions will only be granted when evidence of substantial achievement of modular outcomes is verified.

11.7   To maintain the relevance of learning, UCEM will normally only accept exemption for prior learning awarded within the last 7 years. If the prior learning has been completed more than 7 years previously, discretion may be exercised by the Programme Leader and the applicant may be asked to provide a statement outlining how they have maintained the currency of their learning.

11.8   Applications for exemption can only be made for full modules and must be made by the application deadline for the programme. Retrospective exemptions will not be considered once the applicant has commenced their programme of study.

11.9   UCEM does not allow exemption where the module(s) concerned contribute(s) to undergraduate or postgraduate classification, except in the case of an existing UCEM student transferring to an alternative UCEM programme or a previous UCEM student who achieved credit but no award. Previous UCEM students who were awarded may be given the option to return their current award and instead transfer the credits to continue studying for a higher award. In these circumstances at postgraduate level, the credit transfer should not exceed 120 credits (equivalent of Postgraduate Diploma). e.g. a previous UCEM student who has been awarded a Postgraduate Diploma may be able to return this award and instead transfer their credits to begin studying towards an MSc. Upon return, the lower award would be revoked.

11.10   No grades or marks will be associated with the credit awarded through exemption, except in the case of an existing UCEM student transferring to an alternative UCEM programme or a previous UCEM student who achieved credit but no award (including exit awards).

11.11   Normally at least one-third of any award must be accumulated as a result of learning assessed by UCEM, subject to any overriding Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements. Even in exceptional cases all credits upon which award classifications are based should be assessed by UCEM.

11.12   Credits may not be used to count towards a second qualification which is both at the same level and in a similar subject to the first e.g. a student who has been awarded a BSc Quantity Surveying would not be able to count credits from this programme towards a second BSc in the field of Construction Management.

11.13   However, credit may be used to count towards a second qualification at a higher level (excluding at postgraduate level) e.g. a student with a Certificate of Higher Education may be able to transfer this credit to study towards a BSc.

12. Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) for non-standard admission

12.1   Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) is where, for applicants who do not meet the standard entry requirements for the programme, UCEM assesses previous learning undertaken through experience or practice.

12.2   Students will be notified of the option to apply for RPEL in the entry requirements in the prospectus and on the relevant programme page of the UCEM website.

12.3   The application will be evaluated with regard to the length and range of relevant experience and the applicant's motivation for undertaking the programme of study. This will seek to use evidence to identify their potential to succeed on the course.

12.4   The Programme Leader may determine additional mechanisms to judge the eligibility of an applicant for a programme. For example, the applicant may be invited to:
  • provide a written statement summarising their experience, or provide a written submission relating to a particular aspect of the programme content, in order to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and motivation
  • attend an interview (whether face-to-face or online)
  • complete a diagnostic assessment to assess their existing knowledge in relevant areas.

12.5   When using these mechanisms UCEM will explain to applicants what these entail, why they are being used and the contribution they make to the selection decision. The purpose of these additional mechanisms is to assess the learning the applicant has gained through experience. The experience itself is not assessed.

12.6   Decisions with regard to applications for RPEL are generally dealt with by the Programme Leader in consultation with the Admissions Team.

12.7   In reaching a decision, reference will be made to specific academic requirements relating to the programme in question, any requirements stipulated by accrediting professional bodies, the documentary evidence provided by the candidate and any other evidence gather through the application of 12.3.

13. Procedure for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for the Award of Credit

13.1   UCEM does not currently award credit when recognising prior experiential learning.

14. Late applications

Applications received after the closing date will be considered on a case by case basis. If it is deemed that the late application will have a detrimental effect on the ability of the applicant to complete the programme of study, the applicant will be offered the option to transfer their application to the next available intake.

15. Deferred applications

Successful applicants may request to defer their offer to the next intake. Applicants can only request to defer an offer once. If an applicant wishes to further postpone their entry to a programme beyond the next available intake they will be required to re-apply. If a student defers their place they will be subject to the Terms and Conditions of Contract that apply at the time they accept and register for their chosen programme, including relevant module fees.

16. Feedback

16.1   The reason for rejection will normally be communicated to the applicant via email however additional feedback can be provided on request. To request feedback please contact the Admissions Team at admissions@ucem.ac.uk

16.2   Applicants who are unsuccessful in their application for recognition of prior learning can also request additional feedback from the Admissions Team by emailing admissions@ucem.ac.uk

16.3   Requests for feedback should be made to the Admissions Team within 28 days of the application or exemption decision. UCEM makes a commitment to provide feedback to students within 21 days of their request.

16.4   UCEM applicants are invited to provide feedback on UCEM's application process and the service they have received via a short survey.

17. Complaints and appeals

17.1   If an applicant is unhappy with any aspect of the service received they can make a complaint. For more information, please see the UCEM Student Complaints Procedure (opens new window).

17.2   An applicant may appeal their application or exemption decision if they have valid grounds to do so. These grounds are outlined in the Appeals Procedure (opens new window). In the first instance the appeal should be made to the Admissions Officer, at admissions@ucem.ac.uk, within 10 working days of receiving their application decision.

18. Data protection

18.1   All personal information held by UCEM will be treated in confidence, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). UCEM's Data Protection Policy (opens new window) and Privacy Policy (opens new window) set out the type of information UCEM collect and how it can be used.

19. Employee development

19.1   UCEM ensures that all employees involved in the admissions process are informed of their responsibilities and receive the necessary training and development and resources to ensure they are effective in their roles.

19.2   All employees with the responsibility for setting admission requirements, decision making and/or assessing recognition of prior learning applications will receive regular updates on

relevant internal and external policy, procedure and guidelines. Employees with support responsibilities will be informed of admissions policies and procedures.

19.3   UCEM seeks to ensure that all academic and administrative staff concerned with admissions, including those responsible for assessing recognition of prior learning, are informed of changes and updates to policies and procedures throughout Higher Education relating to admissions, by way of dissemination of information and training of staff as and when appropriate.

19.4   A copy of this document will be provided to UCEM External Examiners on taking up their appointment.

20.   Monitoring and review

20.1   UCEM monitors and reviews its admissions activity annually to ensure that the Admissions Policy operates effectively and in line with its aims.

20.2   As outlined in 16.4, UCEM actively engages "with students who have recently gone through the admissions process and those who declined, with a view to continuously improving the process for future diverse cohorts". (QAA, 2018)

20.3   UCEM's policy is reviewed annually by the Director of Admissions and Registration under referral to the Academic Board.

20.4   The standard entry requirements relating to admission for each programme of study will be reviewed annually by the Programme Leader and any changes will be recommended for approval to the Annual Programme Review Panel and Quality, Standards and Enhancement Committee.

20.5   The Admissions Team will provide annual data with regard to admission decisions for each programme of study.

21.   Terms and Conditions of Contract

21.1   Applicants will be provided with a copy of UCEM's Terms and Conditions of Contract at the invitation to register stage of the admissions process. This document sets out the general terms and conditions which apply to a student's contract and study with UCEM. A contract is formed when an applicant accepts an offer of a place by registering on to a programme of study.

22.   How to contact us

Email:

admissions@ucem.ac.uk

enquiries@ucem.ac.uk

apprenticeships@ucem.ac.uk

Telephone:

UK Freephone: 0800 019 9697

International: +44 (0)118 921 4696

Appendix A   Related policies

Benchmarked documents:

QAA (2018), UK Quality Code, Expectations and Core Practices

QAA (2018), UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access

Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Good Practice Statement (April 2014) Admissions Policies

Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Briefing (2014) Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning – definitions and examples.

UCEM Policies:

Standard entry requirements for each programme of study (to be found in the UCEM prospectus and at www.ucem.ac.uk)

UCEM Academic and General Regulations for Students

UCEM Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity

UCEM Code of Practice and Procedure on Disability and Additional Needs

UCEM Code of Practice and Procedures on Complaints and Appeals

UCEM Privacy Policy

UCEM Code of Practice on Programme Monitoring, Amendment, Review and Discontinuation

UCEM Code of Practice on Safeguarding and Prevent

UCEM Terms and Conditions of Contract

UCEM Terms and Conditions of Contract (Apprenticeship Programmes)