

Writtle University College Admissions Policy Statement for Higher Education

Admissions cycle 2017/18 for entry 2018

Head of Registry & Admissions

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Contents

1	Strategic Vision [QAA Indicator 1]	1
2	Core Admissions Principles [QAA Indicator 1, 2]	1
3	Writtle University College – Higher Education Student Agreement, Terms and Conditions	2
4	Admissions Code of Practice & key overarching principles [QAA Indicator 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8]	2
5	Applicants with additional support needs/disabilities [QAA Indicator 2, 6]	5
6	Admissions criteria and selection [QAA Indicator 7, 8].....	5
7	Applicant experience, expectation and engagement [QAA Indicator 10].....	7
8	Admissions Tests [QAA Indicator 6].....	7
9	Offers [QAA Indicator 6, 8].....	7
10	Contextual Data [QAA Indicator 6]	8
11	Portfolio Guidelines [QAA Indicator 6].....	8
12	Interviews [QAA Indicator 7, 8].....	8
13	Confirmation of results [QAA Indicator 6, 8].....	10
14	Feedback to unsuccessful applicants [QAA Indicator 7, 8, 9]	10
15	Disclosing a Criminal Conviction [QAA Indicator 6].....	10
16	Admissions with academic credit / direct entry [QAA Indicator 7].....	11
17	APL and APEL [QAA Indicator 7].....	11
18	Deferred Entry [QAA Indicator 7]	11
19	Fees and Finances [QAA Indicator 5]	12
20	English Language Requirements [QAA Indicator 5, 6, 7].....	12
21	Fraudulent statements, Omissions and Similarity Detection.....	14
22	Transparency [QAA Indicator 4, 8, 9].....	15
23	Monitoring and Evaluation [QAA Indicator 4]	15
24	Discontinued or suspended Courses [QAA Indicator 9]	16
25	Data Protection [QAA Indicator 2].....	17
26	Appeals and Complaints Procedure [QAA Indicator 3]	17
27	Confidentiality [QAA Indicator 2]	18
28	Student Induction [QAA Indicator 10].....	18
29	Student Charter [QAA Indicator 10]	19
30	Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & the Prevent Duty	19
31	Record keeping duties [QAA Indicator 2]	20

32	Appendix 1 SPA Checklist for higher education providers	22
33	Appendix 2 QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	26
34	Appendix 3: 2017 Entry Tariff explained	30

1 Strategic Vision [QAA Indicator 1]

Admissions Policy Statement for Higher Education

Strategic Plan 2015-18 <http://writtle.ac.uk/Strategic-Vision>

Our strategic vision:

A distinctive place to study and to serve the environment through science and the arts

Recognised for the quality of our specialist education locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Writtle, was established in 1893 has a tremendous reputation within the industry, has a long history of providing higher education and is responsive to the sector, industry and most importantly student needs and interests. This was demonstrated in our application for, and the awarding of, taught degree awarding powers awarded in March 2015, a fantastic achievement reflecting the high-quality of our Higher Education provision and academic standards and will be a huge benefit to our students as we can adapt our courses to meet industry demands in order to maximise employability of our graduates.

Students who begin studying with Writtle University College from September 2017 will be studying towards a 'Writtle University College' award and not a University of Essex award. The transition to Writtle awarded degrees is an exciting one, and reflects the quality of provision on offer, and the quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms in place to promote the student experience.

2 Core Admissions Principles [QAA Indicator 1, 2]

The Admissions Policy Statement for Higher Education should be read in conjunction with the Writtle University College – Higher Education Student Agreement, Terms and Conditions.

<http://writtle.ac.uk/Policies-&-Procedures>

The Admissions Policy Statement for Higher Education underlies all activity which the University College undertakes in relation to student recruitment, selection and admission from initial enquiry through to registration of a student. The policy supports the relationship and engagement with the student and is aligned to our strategic framework, mission and vision.

Writtle University College operates an open Admissions Policy that ensures fair, transparent and equitable treatment of all applicants and is committed to providing a flexible, high quality teaching and learning environment, focused on supporting students in achieving their full potential. This Policy relates to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes offered at Writtle University College.

The University College is fully committed and supportive of equal access and inclusion and aims to avoid unfair discrimination on any grounds. The University College is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and aims to provide a learning and social environment that is free from unfair discrimination. The University College believes that a student body which is diverse in terms of background and experience contributes to a stimulating learning environment.

All applicants are considered for admission on the basis of educational performance and/or professional experience that provides evidence of ability to meet the demands of the chosen course. The University College therefore welcomes applications from students with the potential to succeed at Writtle University College. Applicants are evaluated as individuals, considering both academic and vocational achievements, potential to achieve and to meet higher education outcomes.

3 Writtle University College – Higher Education Student Agreement, Terms and Conditions

The University College has responded to the recommendations from Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) advice on Consumer Protection legislation (March 2015), enabling prospective students to make informed choices. We are committed to helping to ensure students achieve the best possible academic outcomes from their studies. The Writtle University College – Higher Education Student Agreement, Terms and Conditions is made available to applicants via their formal offer letter and is available on the Writtle University College website under the Admissions section <http://writtle.ac.uk/Policies-&-Procedures>

4 Admissions Code of Practice & key overarching principles [QAA Indicator 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8]

The University College is committed to accurate and appropriate pre-entry information and support to prospective students in order to ensure that they are enabled to make an informed decision about whether to apply for a course.

All applicants are considered on an equal basis, taking into account their academic record, academic potential, school reference, personal statement and background in the context of the subject area.

The University College operates a centralised Admission Office ensuring a common and transparent approach. Admissions staff make standard offers based on agreed and confirmed course entry criteria and work closely with subject specialist admissions officers to ensure that all offers are fair and concise. The central Admissions Office is responsible for all communications with UCAS, including the transmissions of admissions decisions.

Applications for full-time undergraduate courses should be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). The University College observes the procedures and deadlines for the handling of applications as set out by UCAS. All applications for admissions to full-time undergraduate degree courses must be made through UCAS. Applications for part time study, postgraduate, further education should be made direct to the University College. All applications should be made through the central Admissions Office.

All applications for undergraduate courses should normally be received by the UCAS deadline date of 15 January; however, the University College will continue to consider late applications with equal consideration. For Art and Design courses, the deadline date is 24 March.

Applications from mature students who are not applying directly from, or within a year of leaving, school or college, who have non-standard qualifications or who wish work experience to be taken into account as part of their application, will be considered on an individual basis.

Applications from international students will be considered and processed consistently in line with Home/EU applications. However, unconditional letters will include the necessary text to comply with the UK Visas & Immigration (Home Office) Points Based System (Tier 4) entry procedure. International applicants will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the minimum entry requirement. The Admissions Officer will make an assessment and evaluation using both UK NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) and the UCAS Guide to International Qualifications. International applicants must be proficient in English.

The University College encourages all applicants to visit the campus and see the extensive facilities. This may, for some courses, involve an interview. [See section 11] All applicants have the opportunity to visit the University College or attend an Open Day. For the majority of courses, the University College does not require the applicant to attend a formal interview. However, in some cases applicants will be interviewed if it is felt that this would identify the potential to study and succeed. For Art and Design courses, applicants are encouraged to attend an interview which provides an opportunity to present a portfolio of art/design work.

The personal statement and reference provide important supplementary information regarding ability, motivation and potential, as well as information about personal circumstances which will be taken into account in reaching an admissions decision.

Allowance will be made for any applicant with verified exceptional circumstances or who face difficult issues or challenges, for example, disrupted studies, examinations, illness, death of a family member.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide full and accurate information as part of the admissions process and to notify the University College of any changes or corrections to their original application.

The admission procedure for undergraduate students is undertaken in accordance with published codes of practice, including the SPA Good Practice for Admissions Policies, the QAA Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to Higher Education – 10 indicators of sound practice (published October 2013) and the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) regulations and complies with current legislation affecting the admissions of students.

Changes to the content of courses including withdrawal, approval or other significant changes to the content will be communicated to the applicant without delay. Occasionally it may be necessary to change components of the course and or facilities. In these rare cases the University College will notify the applicant. The University College will undertake to make every reasonable effort to provide the teaching and academic facilities necessary for the course of study.

The Head of Registry & Admissions offers specific UCAS and admissions procedure training to admissions tutors, supported by SPA (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions). The engagement of Admissions tutors in updating entry criteria, the annual HE Academic Update and HE Recruitment Clinics (run by the Marketing Manager and the Head of Registry & Admissions) ensures they are conversant with entry standards and University College academic procedures. Members of staff from the Registry team regularly participate in training sessions. Particular attention has been paid to procedures introduced for overseas recruitment by the UK Visas & Immigration.

A detailed Admissions Code of Practice is available from Admissions Office.

The University College is committed to ensuring that no prospective or existing student is treated less favourably on grounds of age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, faith, disability, sexual orientation, gender, marital or parental status, political belief or social or economic class.

Responsibility for oversight of and changes to our Writtle University College Admissions Policy – Statement for Higher Education rests with Academic Board.

5 Applicants with additional support needs/disabilities [QAA Indicator 2, 6]

Applicants with disabilities or additional needs are considered on the same academic grounds as all other applicants.

Applicants are encouraged to disclose their additional support needs or disability at the point of application or earlier to ensure appropriate levels of support and/or reasonable adjustments are available from the outset of the course. A team of specialist support staff are available to discuss any aspect of individual needs, prior to and during the admission cycle and on programme.

During the registration process the Student Support department actively encourages students to disclose if they are 'in care' or a 'care leaver'. Additional support is available for these young people. This may vary according to the individual, but could include additional financial and welfare support/assistance.

The team also encourage disclosure of whether students are young adult carers (16-24 year olds whose life is in some way restricted because of the need to take responsibility for the care of a person on a regular basis). As well as any additional support the team have good links to specialist external agencies which offer support and provide further assistance.

Student Support offers a range of services including additional learning support, financial hardship assistance and welfare and counselling. These services are promoted to students as widely as possible including at open days, during application and registration, at induction, through the Student Handbook, marketing materials, noticeboards, student communication mechanisms and academic staff.

<http://www.writtle.ac.uk/Learner-Services>

6 Admissions criteria and selection [QAA Indicator 7, 8]

The University College is committed to providing accurate and appropriate pre-entry information to support prospective students in order to ensure that they are enabled to make an informed decision about whether to apply. The University College's website and printed publications provides clear information and guidance on all entry requirements, grades and subjects including G/VCE A-Level tariff scores, Access to HE Diploma, BTEC qualifications (QCF), NPTC, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Diploma and Cambridge Pre-U, functional skills, GCSEs and desirable practical experience.

Whilst we will normally consider a wide range of subjects as appropriate entry onto our courses, applicants are advised to check individual course requirements, where in some cases there are specific subjects or

combination of subjects which we believe will provide the best preparation for study on a particular course. Students will need to have also achieved a grade C in one other A2 level subject, together with a minimum of four GCSE passes at Grade C/4/5 or above, to include English Language, Mathematics and Science. Detailed UCAS Entry requirements are available within the UCAS Course Search facility. These provide details about our courses, the University College and course specific entry qualifications.

Unit grade information will be made available for all certificated AS and A level qualifications. We will not state specific unit grades as part of our conditional offers but we may look closely at unit grades in cases where applicants do not meet the conditions of their offers at Confirmation. Unit grade information will also be taken into consideration during Clearing.

The University College welcomes applications from those with vocational qualifications, who are returning to education, who do not have the specified formal qualifications and those who are not applying directly from or within a year of leaving school or college, who have non-standard qualifications or who request work or life experience to be taken into account as part of their application.

In addition to academic qualifications the University College will consider whether the applicant is suitably motivated to successfully complete their chosen course. When selecting applicants the University College will take into account information provided within the personal statement and reference.

International qualifications are also welcomed together with an appropriate level of English Language. International qualifications are evaluated by referring to independently published guides such as UK NARIC and the UCAS Guide to International Qualifications.

If an undergraduate applicant withdraws from a programme in one year, and wishes to re-apply, the applicant is required to use the UCAS admissions process to re-apply.

The University College reserves the right not to consider an applicant for re-entry if the applicant has previously been withdrawn on academic grounds, unless extenuating circumstances have been declared and approved.

The University College requires applicants to provide satisfactory evidence of their academic achievements and reserves the right to verify all qualifications declared by an applicant. In the event that an applicant is

unable to evidence their achievement to the satisfaction of the University College, we reserve the right to withdraw the application.

7 Applicant experience, expectation and engagement [QAA Indicator 10]

The process of engaging with applications early in the admissions cycle builds a strong sense of 'belonging' from the outset. As part of our continuous engagement with applicants and to support the transition into Higher Education, academic admissions tutors together with key admissions and professional support staff, provide essential pre-entry information, advice and guidance. Each subject area has its own admissions tutor, responsible for course-specific decisions, offer and supporting prospective students through their initial enquiry, application and follow-up to start their course.

During confirmation applicants receive further detailed information to support academic preparation, including induction and registration details. A comprehensive Induction Guide is posted early September to all confirmed applicants and returning students.

Academic course induction takes place during the first week of arrival. The content of the academic induction may vary by subject area but will include course and module information, teaching, learning and assessment, an introduction and discussion of the Student Charter, the published Course Handbook, and regulations. Students will be shown how to access their online course timetable and Moodle - the University College's virtual learning environment. <http://writtle.ac.uk/Registration>

8 Admissions Tests [QAA Indicator 6]

It is not Writtle University College's standard policy to use admissions tests as part of its selection process.

9 Offers [QAA Indicator 6, 8]

On receiving an application the applicant will be issued with an acknowledgement within 3-5 working days, however, during busy periods and particularly during Christmas closure, the turnaround times may be extended. Where possible decisions will normally be made within 5-7 working days and offers dispatched electronically via UCAS, email and post. Any offer and/or subsequent registrations are made on the basis of the information supplied by the applicant is true and complete.

In some cases where an applicant has applied for one course and is unsuccessful, an alternative course may be offered, in which case this will be officially communicated to the applicant by the Admissions Office. The

applicant is then asked to confirm that they accept an alternative course by emailing confirmation to the Admissions Office.

If, an offer cannot be made, the applicant's file is referred to the appointed subject specific Admissions Officer and/or Head of School. This ensures that the file has been thoroughly examined and no details/evidence missed.

An offer, whether conditional or unconditional, will be made in good faith taking into account information supplied by the applicant and/or referee at the time of the application.

In light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn. The University College reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers. However, an offer made in error where all conditions have been satisfied will only be withdrawn with the applicant's consent.

10 Contextual Data [QAA Indicator 6]

From 2012 the University College will be collecting contextual data from UCAS. Publicly available datasets from the government and other agencies will be collated and stored, such as school/college A level performance. No decisions will be made purely on the basis of this information and all undergraduate applicants must meet our standard academic criteria to be considered for entry. Contextual data may be used a part of the overall decision making process and will not be used in isolation.

11 Portfolio Guidelines [QAA Indicator 6]

For courses invested in the School of Design, applications are expected to demonstrate an interest in design and creative studies. It is recommended that applicants submit a portfolio of design work during the application process. The portfolio may include work produced from a recognised Art and Design course or personal work. Detailed Portfolio Guidelines are available direct from the School of Design.

12 Interviews [QAA Indicator 7, 8]

For the majority of programmes, the University College does not require applicants to attend an interview as part of the selection process. However, some programme areas require applicants to attend an interview as one element of the decision-making process and prior to making an offer.

Interviews provide a valuable opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their communication skills, analytical and/or practical skills, motivation and interest in a specific programme of study. Courses which require an interview are clearly identified both on the University College website and UCAS Course Search – Entry Profiles.

All applicants for interview for a specific course are assessed individually, without partiality or bias, in line with published entry criteria and in accordance with the admission policy in relation to equality and diversity.

Interviews dates, times, duration will be published in advance of the admissions cycle. Applicants will be provided with adequate notice period prior to interview, normally a minimum of two weeks, together with an alternative interview date. Interviews for full-time undergraduate students will be processed electronically via UCAS.

The University College will make available, where reasonably possible, telephone or SKYPE interviews and follow the same principles of a face-to-face interview. Interviews are normally conducted by trained interviewers.

If an applicant is under the age of 18 years of age at the time of the interview, arrangement will be made under our Safeguarding Policy.

Applicants will be sent clear pre-interview information in relation to the interview process, the structure of the day, interview criteria, preparation and assessment in advance of the interview. Applicants may be asked specific questions in relation to their personal statement and practical experience. Applicants will be informed in advance of interview if they are expected to undertake any appropriate research.

Applicants are encouraged to inform the University College of any specific requirements or support needs prior to interview so that reasonable adjustments can be made to support the interview. Staff that carry out interviews undergo specific training appropriate to interviewing, safeguarding and equality and diversity.

All associated travel and accommodation costs incurred by the applicant will not be refunded if the applicant is unsuccessful or successful in gaining an offer of a place on their chosen programme of study. Following the interview the outcome will be communicated normally with 7 working days from the date of interview, however, during busy periods particularly during Christmas closure, the turnaround times may be extended. Any written notes made during the interview by the interviewer can be requested following the interview. Any additional requests for interview feedback should be made in writing by the applicant to the Admissions Office.

13 Confirmation of results [QAA Indicator 6, 8]

'Confirmation' refers to the period in August when Universities/Colleges receive examination results. Applicants who achieve the required entry grades have their conditional offer confirmed and accepted. Applicants who have not met the conditions of offer are reviewed by the subject Admissions Officer who will contact the applicant directly to discuss possible alternate course/s, although there is no guarantee that an offer will be confirmed.

The confirmation procedure includes the exchange and processing of data between UCAS and Universities/Colleges. UCAS Track Progress is available to all students to keep up-to-date with the progress of their application and reply to offers.

14 Feedback to unsuccessful applicants [QAA Indicator 7, 8, 9]

In order to support our transparent admissions process, the University College undertakes to provide appropriate good quality feedback to unsuccessful applicants and where possible considers alternate courses of study.

Feedback is the communication to an applicant who has been unsuccessful in gaining an offer. Feedback may also include suggestions as to how the applicant may improve their application. This communication, should provide details as to why the applicant was unsuccessful in gaining an offer and where possible options for alternative courses of study at the University College. Feedback will only be made direct to the applicant unless the University College receives a written request from the applicant to share information with other individuals. Occasionally, successful applicants request feedback following offer and/or interview, the Admissions Office will support these requests. Admissions Officers are prepared to provide further written feedback upon request from the applicant.

UCAS have developed an online electronic feedback system. This has enabled the University College to provide a brief description of why an application has been deemed unsuccessful through the UCAS system. Applicants can view the decision and any reasons via UCAS Track.

15 Disclosing a Criminal Conviction [QAA Indicator 6]

The admission of students with a declared criminal conviction is subject to assessment by the Applications Committee in relation to the duty of care to the wider University College community. All information disclosed to the Applications Committee is confidential and will be held as such by the committee in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1988.

Applicants who declare a criminal conviction will receive a letter accompanied by a criminal conviction disclosure form (SCCIF). The disclosure form requests further information about the nature of the conviction. This information will be then be reviewed by the Applications Committee.

The Applications Committee Terms of Reference, including the detailed Students with Criminal Convictions policy and procedure is available from the University College Secretary.

16 Admissions with academic credit / direct entry [QAA Indicator 7]

Applicants are welcomed with non-standard entry qualifications and those with prior experience and achievements. Some applicants may be able to transfer credit for previous learning or claim credit for some elements of the course. Details are available upon request.

17 APL and APEL [QAA Indicator 7]

Applicants may be considered through the accreditation of prior learning (*APL*), which may be certificated or experiential. The Admissions Officer for the relevant course is responsible for advising the student on whether their previous learning might be used to replace part of their proposed course of study. Their application for APL is considered by the Credit Approvals Board. Staff and Student Guides on the APL process are available.

The University College welcomes top-up applications from students who have gained previous qualifications. Applicants are advised to contact the subject admissions tutor to discuss individual requirements. Bridging studies may be required as part of the entry criteria, where applicable.

18 Deferred Entry [QAA Indicator 7]

Applicants may wish to defer their entry. The University College generally welcomes applicants who intend to defer their entry for a year (a gap year). If this is the case the applicant should contact the University College Admissions Office or UCAS.

Applicants who apply via UCAS must follow UCAS deferral procedures. The University College will not normally allow an applicant to defer their entry for more than one year. If the applicant requests a deferral for more than one year, the applicant must re-apply.

19 Fees and Finances [QAA Indicator 5]

Information of all course related costs are clearly available on the course and financial pages of the University College website. Fees are reviewed and payable on an annual basis. Depending on the course of study, fees may be subject to an annual inflationary increase in every year where the course lasts for more than one year. There may be other costs which are course specific; these are clearly stated on the course and financial pages of our website. The University College charges different levels of tuition fees depending on whether the student is classified as either a Home/EU student or an International student.

Students are expected to have sufficient funds to pay course fees and living expenses during their period of study, and are asked to provide details of funding arrangements on the application form and during the enrolment process. Information regarding current fees, scholarships and bursaries can be located on the University College website and are also published in the Higher Education Fees – Financial Information and Regulations for Students. Fees for overseas students are fixed annually and therefore a small increase will be applied during the duration of the student's course.

The Admissions Team determines the tuition fee status of a student in accordance with UK Government legislation Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations which states that students who are classified as 'overseas' may be charged a higher level of fee than those classified as 'home' or 'EU' students. Assessments of fee status are carried out on an individual basis and take into account the circumstances of each applicant. Assessments cannot be carried out until an application for admission has been made. A completed Fee Status Questionnaire together with supporting evidence is used to assess and determine an applicant's fee status.

There is a compulsory tuition fee deposit requirement for overseas applicants.

20 English Language Requirements [QAA Indicator 5, 6, 7]

Entry criteria for students whose first language is not English are reviewed annually. Reviews include consideration of UKVI rules and are carried out in consultation with academic teams, the Pre-Sessional English Language (PSEL) course leader and staff responsible for International Recruitment. Review outcomes are reported to Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee and revised guidance is published on the University College website.

Applicants whose first language is not English must prove that they are proficient in English language necessary to succeed in their chosen course. For applicants who do not currently reach the required

criteria, registration onto one of our Pre-Sessional English Language courses may be sufficient, subject to meeting UKVI requirement for maximum period of study in the UK.

The Pre-Sessional English runs over the spring and summer and lasts between 18 weeks and 6 weeks and is delivered in 6-week blocks, the entry point is based on the student's level of English. The course is designed to support international students whose first language is not English. The course includes study visits which enrich students' socio-cultural knowledge and understanding of British culture.

On completion of the PSEL course, and subject to passing all the required assessment or achieving the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score, students would normally progress on to a Writtle University College Further Education (Level 3) or Higher Education course.

The descriptor for Level 4 in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) has informed the design of this course. The English language requirements of Writtle University College are benchmarked against the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for languages) and the IELTS test (International English Language Testing Service). Where applicants require a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa, the University College's benchmarks also meet the minimum English language requirements of the UK Visas & Immigration.

IELTS requirements for entry onto Pre-sessional English prior to entry onto a Writtle University College course (Table1) All IELTS elements must be above 4.0 for entry onto Pre-sessional English (CEFR B1)

Table 1 INTENDED COURSE OF STUDY	IELTS if taking PSEL 1 (18 weeks)	IELTS if taking PSEL 2 (12 weeks)	IELTS if taking PSEL 3 (6 weeks)
Further Education (Level 3)	4.0	4.5	5.0
Foundation Degree or Higher Education Diploma / Certificate	4.0	4.5	5.0
Bachelors Degree	4.5	5.0	5.5
Masters Degree or PhD	5.0	5.5	6.0

Non-EEA nationals whose first language is not English must prove that they are sufficiently able to understand and express themselves in both spoken and written English. Writtle University College requires that these applicants have a minimum level of English language as shown below (Table 2).

EEA applicants whose first language is not English are subject to the same rules as for non-EEA applicants and will need to achieve the required International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score or equivalent (Table 2). It may be possible for EEA applicants to provide other evidence that they have sufficient English to follow the course they wish to take at Writtle. This must clearly show evidence of successful study of the English language of at least four years from a recognised language organisation, with the date of their highest level English language exam being within two years of the date of application.

Table 2	IELTS [validity 2 years]
FE [CEFR B1] Evidence of SELT will be required for CAS	Overall score 5.5 Minimum 5.0 in all elements
FDA / Higher Certificates / Higher Diplomas [CEFR B1] Evidence of SELT will be required for CAS	Overall score 5.5 Minimum 5.0 in all elements
UG degree [CEFR B2] Evidence of SELT is not required for CAS	Overall score 6.0 Minimum 5.5 in all elements
PG [CEFR B2] Evidence of SELT is not required for CAS	Overall score 6.5 Minimum 5.5 in all elements

21 Fraudulent statements, Omissions and Similarity Detection

UCAS provides a Similarity Detection Service, which identifies potential plagiarism in applicants' personal statements. Full details are published on the [UCAS website](#) for HE Staff.

The following is the policy and procedure that Writtle University College will adopt:

- where UCAS reports an applicant under the Similarity Detection Service and the percentage of similarity is equal to or above 40% the Head of Admissions will contact the applicant and invite him/her to submit a revised personal statement within 14 days. The applicants file will be held in central Admissions
- on receipt of a revised personal statement the application will be sent to the relevant subject Admissions Tutor and a decision made following the standard admissions procedure

- where no revised statement is received within 14 days a reminder will be sent to the applicant by the Head of Admissions, giving a further 7 days notice and a notification of a possible course rejection if no response is received
- where no revised statement is received after the two notifications the applicant's file will be passed to the relevant subject Admissions Tutor with the percentage score in order to make a decision

22 Transparency [QAA Indicator 4, 8, 9]

The University College seeks to provide applicants with clear and accurate information. This includes information about the Admissions Policy and processes, published course information, entry requirements, admissions procedures, financial costs, financial support and the social and support facilities which the University College offers.

Detailed UCAS Entry Profiles are available for all courses. These can be located on the UCAS website from the Course Search facility.

The Writtle University College – Higher Education Student Agreement, Terms and Conditions sets out the terms and conditions relating to an offer of a place on a course of study at Writtle University College and is an agreement the university college and its students as to the rights, roles and responsibilities of both parties. <http://writtle.ac.uk/Policies-&-Procedures>

23 Monitoring and Evaluation [QAA Indicator 4]

The Admissions Policy is monitored and reviewed annually by the Academic Standards Committee.

The Academic Standards Committee meets to consider and monitor entry requirements, recommend changes to the tariff and monitor and approve entry criteria.

Admission profiles in respect of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability, age and qualifications on entry are considered and monitored by the Equality and Diversity Group. A student representative is included in the membership of this group.

Central Admissions periodically audits offers made, timescales and application turnaround times.

An admissions survey is included with all formal course offers and acceptance letters. Information received from the survey helps inform the admission service of how we can better meet the needs of our

applicants. The admissions team will carefully examine the feedback and this will help inform future development plans within admissions.

An admissions survey is issued to all applicants who choose to decline their course offer at Writtle University College. The information carefully examined by Marketing and Admissions and will help inform future recruitment planning.

The University College makes every effort to ensure that the information provided is accurate when it is published. The University College provides printed materials such as the prospectus and subject-specific literature more than 12 months before a course begins. Applicants should therefore refer to our website for the most up-to-date information about course content, selection criteria, processes and financial matters.

The University College is committed to providing a fair and accessible admissions service. All staff involved in recruitment and selection are offered and encourage to attend training which is appropriate to their role.

24 Discontinued or suspended Courses [QAA Indicator 9]

Writtle University College will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver courses of study in accordance with descriptions published and set out in the relevant prospectus, publish materials and the Writtle University College website. However, the prospectus is produced prior to the admissions cycle and it is inevitable that changes may occur between the date of printing and entry on to a course. The University College will undertake practical and reasonable steps to minimise the impact of potential changes and will ensure that all applicants are kept full informed.

New courses are continually being introduced to the portfolio and optional modules revised. Applicants are advised to contact the University College for up-to-date course information.

The University College reserves the right to withdraw courses or parts of courses where there is insufficient demand, to charge a registration fee to cover aspects such as study visits and learning materials and to vary modes of delivery. Our offer to the applicant and the acceptance of a place at Writtle University College will be subject to this condition.

The General University College Regulations and the Academic Regulations are contained in the appropriate Student Handbooks, which are available on request.

Where it is necessary to discontinue or suspend a course or where there are significant changes to a course, between the time an offer is made and enrolment, the central Admissions Office will inform the applicants and advise them of the options available.

The University College operates specific procedures in relation to course closure.

25 Data Protection [QAA Indicator 2]

By signing the UCAS/Writtle University College application form, applicants give their permission to the institution (Writtle University College) to process their personal data for the purposes of selection and admission. The information on the application will form a key part of the individual student record. Should the applicant register as a student, this information will be used to make statutory returns to various bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). A full and detailed declaration is available upon request and part of the online registration process for each year that the student is registered with the University College. All data is held and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. <http://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Data%20Protection%20Policy.pdf>

Anonymised applicant data is analysed by the University College for statutory monitoring, planning, teaching and learning, equality and diversity and in order to ensure that the processes are fair and effective.

26 Appeals and Complaints Procedure [QAA Indicator 3]

It is recognised that very occasionally applicants may have reason to question or express an opinion to the University College about its decision or the way in which their application has been handled. Applicants in this situation should direct their query initially to the Admissions Officer for the course they have applied within 28 days of the occurrence (e.g. decision, interview, open day); during Clearing the timeframe to investigate disputes will be 14 days. If they remain dissatisfied, the query should be directed to the Head of Registry & Admissions who will conduct a review of the complaint and/or appeal in order to safeguard the applicants' interest.

*A **complaint** is a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policies.*

*An **appeal** is a request for a formal review of an admissions decision or the wording/terms/conditions of an offer.*

If, at any time during the admissions cycle, an applicant has cause to complain or appeal about an operational, admissions decision or administration matter, they should contact the Head of Admissions. If there is cause to continue with the complaint or appeal the applicant should put forward their complaint or appeal through the University College's formal Complaints Procedure, available upon request from the University College Secretary. http://www.writtle.ac.uk/PDFS/complaints_procedure.pdf

27 Confidentiality [QAA Indicator 2]

The Admissions Office will not share applicant or student personal details with a third party, unless we receive confirmation from the applicant/student in writing in the form a 'consent to share' declaration. All data is treated in strict confidence and is shared between the applicant/student, the Admissions Officer and admissions staff within the appropriate School and Department involved in the admissions processes. All application data is stored centrally in the Admissions Office. Application data of successful applicants forms the basis of the student record. All data is held and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

28 Student Induction [QAA Indicator 10]

An informal cross- University College Induction and Enrolment Planning Working Group, with membership from Registry, Marketing, Learner Services and other central support and academic departments has worked with the SU to improve the experience of new students and their journey and transition into University College life.

The induction process commences with students receiving pre-course information from central Admissions. The initial induction information provides an overview of central information such as online timetables, campus maps and useful websites/contact information. This information supports the students' experience from arrival, induction to registration. Dissemination of the curriculum information to students occurs predominantly during induction, initial lectures and at course and personal tutorials.

During confirmation applicants receive further detailed information to support academic preparation, including induction and registration details. A comprehensive **Induction Guide** is sent to all confirmed applicants in early September.

The Freshers' week includes an academic element with an introduction and discussion of the **Student Charter**, Course Handbook, timetables, course content and module information, Library, Moodle and IT services. Further induction sessions include student support, campus orientation, an international

welcome, social, sporting and team-building activity. This enables students to orientate themselves within the University College learning environment before teaching commences.

The University College recognises the importance of the SU involvement during Freshers' week in welcoming and supporting new and returning students. The SU President and SU Academic Sabbatical Officer deliver a range of induction talks to the Schools and are making increasing efforts to improve the engagement of all groups.

All taught postgraduate students attend an induction day to aid transition, articulate expectations and build on the University College's long established commitment to PDP at Level 7. The induction and generic delivery of the *Research Methods* module encourages students to meet and work with their peers from other disciplines and be part of the wider postgraduate community

29 Student Charter [QAA Indicator 10]

The Writtle University College HE Charter has been in place since 1997 and following a review during 2010-11 introduced a revised Charter in line with the Government White paper *Students at the Heart of the System* (BIS, 2011).

Writtle University College is committed to continually improving the quality of its services and the Student Charter is one way of outlining that commitment to you. The Student Charter aims to outline what students can expect of the University College, as well as outlining what is reasonably expected of students by the University College.

The Student Charter explains how students can make the most of the opportunities available to them whilst being a student at the University College. The [Student Charter](#) has been prepared in collaboration with the Students' Union. The Charter is reviewed annually. <http://writtle.ac.uk/Registration>

30 Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & the Prevent Duty

Writtle University College is committed to our moral and statutory duty to ensure that we function with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults receiving education and training. Writtle University College staff are fully aware and compliant with the new Department for Education statutory guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2016).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf.

Writtle University College's full Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Practice Guidance (which is updated annually) is available on the University College website at <http://writtle.ac.uk/Safeguarding-and-Prevent>. This includes details of the safeguarding team and their contact details.

Higher education institutions have a duty of care to students, staff and visitors. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a new statutory duty in September 2015 for higher education institutions to have "due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism". This means that institutions now have a statutory duty to engage with the government's Prevent agenda. The government has published guidance setting out what steps higher education institutions are expected to take to meet this duty.

Universities must balance a wide-ranging set of responsibilities. Universities are open institutions with a legal obligation to promote and facilitate academic freedom and freedom of speech. However, these are qualified rights. Section 31 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act states, that in meeting the statutory duty, higher education institutions must have *particular regard* to the duty to ensure freedom of speech and the importance of academic freedom.

Writtle University College coordinates Prevent work under the umbrella of safeguarding and has a Single Point of Contact for Prevent (SPOC) see 3.2 below. To ensure compliance with the duty, WUC has, and continues to:

- Assess risk of radicalisation in our area/institution;
- Develop and progress an action plan to reduce this risk;
- Train staff to recognise radicalisation and extremism;
- Work in partnership with other agencies;
- Develop referral mechanisms and refer people to Channel;
- Maintain records and reports to show compliance;
- Promote British Values;
- Update relevant policies and procedures (including the IS&T Policy & External Speakers Policy).

31 Record keeping duties [QAA Indicator 2]

The University College is committed to the management and disposal of its academic and non-academic records. The Records Retention Policy and Retention schedule outlines our approach to the creation, retrieval, storage and disposal of student records.

Writtle University College Admissions Policy

The University College will keep admissions documents for all students who register at the University College for the entire period during which a student is registered with Writtle University College and then for a further six year period following the end of the relationship.

As part of the admissions process for applicants who are not successful in gaining admission the files are held for a minimum of 12 months and subsequently confidentially destroyed.

As part of the University College's UKVI (Home Office) Tier 4 Sponsor Licence compliance duty, the University College is required to maintain copies of all international Tier 4 student passports and visas (valid for study) together with academic qualifications, transcripts and associated documents used for the basis of admission. These documents form part of the Tier 4 audit checks and registration process. These documents are stored confidentially.

32 Appendix 1 SPA Checklist for higher education providers

Admissions Policies [April 2014]

Admissions Policies: SPA Checklist for higher education providers

April 2014

Source: <https://www.spa.ac.uk/resources/admissions-policies?section=151>

Overarching/introductory information

Yes	identified as your institution's overarching admissions policy
Yes	scope – e.g. UG and/or PG, full-time, part-time, internally and/or externally delivered
Yes	links to any policies covering areas of admissions outside its scope
Yes	when the policy was approved and/or the application cycle to which it applies
Yes	identifies any partner institutions to which the admissions policy also applies
Yes	clear headings and table of contents (if long document)
Yes	links to related policy or procedure documents

Core Admissions Policy

Yes	high-level statement of your commitment to fair admissions and fair access
Yes	principles underpinning your admissions policy and practice
Yes	commitment to applicants and the application process, transparency, consistency and providing a good quality applicant experience
Yes	commitment to equal consideration of all 'on time' applicants
Yes	support at a senior level for recruitment, admissions and WP
Yes	what qualifications, knowledge, qualities and skills applicants should have
Yes	how you assess merit and potential
Yes	how applications are considered and assessed, where responsibility for decision-making lies, and likely timescales for different stages of the application process
Yes	commitment to handling complaints, appeals and reviews of admission decisions appropriately, professionally and within a given framework
Yes	commitment to ensuring coherent practice/implementation of policy across the institution
Yes	compliance with relevant codes and regulations, including:
Yes	all relevant legislation (including equal opportunities and data protection in particular)
Yes	UCAS's guidance and manuals for institutions (where appropriate)
Yes	requirements of relevant accrediting professional bodies (where appropriate)

Yes	SPA's good practice guidance and the principles of fair admissions
Yes	links to other relevant institutional policies and any other information affecting your admissions policy and practice
Yes	review, implementation and monitoring of admissions policy and practice
Yes	which bodies or individuals have responsibility for: setting entry requirements making decisions on applications ensuring consistency across the institution specific functions (e.g. fee status assessment, criminal conviction checks)
Yes	details of any progression or articulation agreements
Yes	details of any collaborative partnerships with other HE providers
Yes	details of any arrangements with intermediaries/external agents

Enquiries and information, advice and guidance (IAG) for applicants

Yes	providing high-quality IAG to applicants and advisors on all aspects of recruitment, selection and admissions, and keeping it up-to-date
Yes	publishing entry requirements in a clear and accessible manner
Yes	provision of the prospectus and other relevant information in alternative formats (e.g. Braille)
Yes	maintaining the accuracy of external IAG (e.g. UCAS Entry Profiles, KISs)
Yes	communicating changes made after publication/distribution of printed materials
Yes	applicant enquiries received by phone, email, post, social media etc.
Yes	contact details for applicant enquiries

The application process

Yes	how applications are assessed, including; providing IAG on the application process and assessment methods assessing applications to selective courses equally and fairly as part of a gathered field processing applications efficiently keeping in touch with applicants throughout the process
Yes	multiple applications from the same individual, both within and across admission cycles
Yes	entry requirements, including; any institution-wide entry requirements, and links to where course-specific entry requirements are detailed whether use is made of the UCAS Tariff (where appropriate)

	<p>how international/non-standard qualifications are considered and evaluated</p> <p>whether (and when) notarised transcripts are required for qualifications not in English</p> <p>whether and how prior experiential learning is considered</p> <p>any English/Welsh language requirements and when they are waived</p> <p>any policy on resitting examinations</p> <p>commitment to regular review of entry requirements</p> <p>reservation of the right to exercise academic judgment and discretion when assessing prior attainment</p>
Yes	<p>contextualised admissions, including;</p> <p>what contextual information is used and how it is determined</p> <p>sources of any linked databases and how they are linked to applications</p> <p>use of contextual data/information in the application process (e.g. flagging, adjustment of scores, guaranteed interview/offer)</p> <p>declarations of mitigating/extenuating circumstances</p>
Yes	<p>interviews and/or auditions (if used), including:</p> <p>providing information to applicants ahead of the interview/audition</p> <p>ensuring involved staff are fully trained and experienced</p> <p>conducting interviews in line with equal opportunities policy</p> <p>reasonable alternate arrangements where travel to interview/audition is impractical</p>
Yes	<p>submission of portfolios, written work or audition videos (if used)</p>
n/a	<p>admissions tests (if used), including details of content and assessment methods</p>
n/a	<p>enhanced disclosure of criminal convictions</p>
Yes	<p>decision-making and offers, including:</p> <p>expeditious communication of decisions to applicants</p> <p>clear, easy to understand offers, consistent with published entry requirements</p> <p>when and why any 'non-standard' offers might be made</p> <p>whether unsuccessful applicants are considered for other programmes and how</p> <p>next steps for applicants after receiving an offer</p> <p>terms and conditions involved in offers</p>
Yes	<p>meeting offer conditions, Confirmation, Clearing and Adjustment, including</p> <p>transition and enrolment for successful applicants</p> <p>applicants who miss offer conditions and next steps for you and for them</p> <p>Clearing and Adjustment (where appropriate)</p>

Yes	deferred entry
Yes	APL/APEL for meeting entry requirements and/or for advanced standing
Yes	document verification and identification of fraud

Feedback to applications

Yes	feedback for unsuccessful applicants; if feedback is provided automatically or how to request it timescale for feedback feedback requests from third parties (e.g. schools, parents)
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Policies and procedures specific to particular applicant groups

Yes	young and/or mature applicants
Yes	care leavers
Yes	applicants with disabilities or specific learning needs
Yes	applicants declaring criminal convictions
Yes	international applicants
Yes	refugees and asylum seekers

Changes to and discontinuation of programmes

Yes	applications received after a programme has been substantially changed or discontinued
Yes	discontinuation or changes made after offers have been made, including; informing offer-holders and providing advice and support on options/next steps supporting offer-holders in finding and securing places on alternative programmes, internally or at another HE provider (where appropriate)

Appeals and complaints procedure

Yes	fair and professional handling of appeals and complaints, including; informing applicants at the earliest appropriate opportunity timescales and deadlines for appeals and complaints
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SPA

April 2014

33 Appendix 2 QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Part B: Chapter 2 Recruitment, selection and admissions to higher education

Source: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/B2.pdf>
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>

The Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about recruitment, selection and admission which higher education providers are required to meet. Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

The Indicators of sound practice:

Indicator 1 Recruitment, selection and admission policies are informed by the strategic priorities of the higher education provider. Higher education providers promote a shared understanding of their approach among all those involved in Recruitment, selection and admission.

Indicator 2 Recruitment, selection and admission processes are conducted in a professional manner by authorised and competent representatives of the higher education provider.

Indicator 3 Higher education providers have procedures for handling appeals and complaints about recruitment, selection and admission that are fair and accessible. Appeals and complaints procedures are conducted expeditiously and in accordance with a published timescale.

Indicator 4 Higher education providers monitor, review and update their recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures, in order to enhance them and to ensure that they continue to support the provider's mission and strategic objectives. Higher education providers determine the frequency with which monitoring and review are undertaken.

Indicator 5 Recruitment activities undertaken by higher education providers assist prospective students in making informed decisions about higher education.

Indicator 6 Higher education providers make clear to prospective students how the recruitment, selection and admission process will be conducted and what prospective students have to do.

Indicator 7 Selection processes for entry into higher education are underpinned by transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, and present no unnecessary barriers to prospective students.

Indicator 8 Higher education providers determine how decisions and the reasons for those decisions are recorded and conveyed to prospective students.

Indicator 9 Higher education providers inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme to which they have applied. Prospective students are advised promptly of the options available in the circumstances.

Indicator 10 Higher education providers give successful applicants sufficient information to enable them to make the transition from prospective student to current student.

SPA Best Practice Guides

<https://www.spa.ac.uk/resources/admissions-policies-menu>

Admissions Policies

<https://www.spa.ac.uk/resources/admissions-policies?section=151>

Good Practice Toolkit

<https://www.spa.ac.uk/good-practice-toolkit>

Gap Analysis for QAA Quality Code

The QAA's *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* sets out Expectations that all HE providers in the UK are required to meet. Chapter B2 of this Code, [*Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education*](#), underwent significant revision in 2013, with changes coming into effect from August 2014.

The *QAA Quality Code* sets out a single Expectation for recruitment, selection and admissions:

Recruitment, selection and admissions policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme. (B2, p. 7)

In addition, ten Indicators reflect sound practice and ways in which HE providers might demonstrate that they meet this Expectation. Four of these apply across all areas of recruitment, selection and admissions, while the remaining six are particular to specific stages in the process. Further information is available at <http://www.spa.ac.uk/information/qaqualitycodeb2>.

This document provides a simple gap analysis to assist HE providers in assessing how their practice matches up to the new Indicators and meets the Expectation, any improvements or adjustments that need to be made to bridge gaps, and who should be involved in these.

However, it should be stressed that the QAA's Indicators are not intended to be used as a checklist. Each Indicator is accompanied by substantial text that elaborates on the Indicator and provides further examples of good practice. This document should only be used alongside – and not as a replacement for – the full text of Chapter B2. Providers should also be aware that other sections of the *QAA Quality Code* may also have relevance to their admissions process and policy, and Chapter B2 is not intended to be read in isolation. Of particular note are:

Chapter B6, [*Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning*](#)

Chapter B10, [*Managing higher education provision with others*](#)

Part C, [*Information about higher education provision*](#), covering whether this information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy

HE providers may also find this gap analysis template useful when developing and reviewing their admissions policy and procedures, and may wish to use it in combination with SPA's [Good Practice Statement on Admissions Policies](#) and our [admissions policies checklist](#).

SPA is always happy to offer advice and guidance; please contact us at enquiries@spa.ac.uk (tel: 01242 544891) or consult our website at www.spa.ac.uk.

34 Appendix 3: 2017 Entry Tariff explained

2017 UCAS Tariff statement

Source: www.ucas.com January 2016

What the new points mean:

- All qualifications that are currently on the UCAS Tariff will continue to attract points under the new system.
- The new Tariff points are based on a new approach, using a qualification's size and grades to calculate total Tariff points.
- The numbers are much lower, for example an A level grade A* gets 56 points under the new Tariff, in comparison with 140 under the current Tariff.
- Applicants still need to achieve the same grades at A level, Scottish Advanced Higher, Scottish Higher or BTEC, or in any other qualification they are taking to meet higher education course entry requirements.
- The new UCAS Tariff points should not have any impact on decisions about qualification choices at school or college, or preparation or application to a higher education course.
- The AS is now 40% of an A level – this is more accurate according to qualification regulators.
- You may notice that universities and colleges are starting to refer to new UCAS Tariff points from now on, because they know that younger learners start their higher education course research early.
- 2017 entry courses advertised on the UCAS search tool from May 2016 will refer to the new UCAS Tariff points only.

The UCAS Tariff was first introduced in 2001 to help those working in admissions to make comparisons between qualifications. It was originally designed to compare very similar qualifications in terms of their preparation for broadly similar HE progression routes. Since, then, however, both the range of qualifications held by applicants and the variety of progression routes into HE have increased.

In 2012 UCAS complete a review looking at what information universities and colleges, students, and schools and advisers need about qualifications to facilitate selection from admissions to HE. The review identified a number of issues, including students' misunderstanding about how the Tariff is used in admissions, and the needs of admissions teams for more detailed, structured information about qualifications. In response, UCAS has published new guidance for students and advisers on Tariff entry requirements and offers and introduced Qualifications Information Profiles (QIPs), which offer detailed

information about qualifications to help admissions staff in considering students with vocational or non-UK qualifications.

The review also identified a number of issues with the effectiveness and sustainability of the Tariff. Specifically, concerns were raised about the inability of the methodology to accommodate common vocational and composite qualifications, anomalies with some point allocations, and the cost and complexity of the management process. In addition, it became apparent that the original Tariff could not easily accommodate some of the planned reforms to qualifications underway in the UK and also needed to respond to the growing demand from the HE sector for international qualifications to be included in the Tariff.

In response a new Tariff has been developed in partnership with representatives from the HE sector. It is the result of substantial programme of modelling, testing and evaluation which looked at a number of different options. UCAS has also worked closely with qualification regulators and representatives from the secondary education sector. Our testing has evaluated the potential of the new Tariff on students, individual qualifications, admissions' practice and university league tables. Taking account of all of the evidence from these assessments we believe that the proposed solution is the one which best meets the needs of students and higher education providers (HEPs).

The key changes

- The new UCAS Tariff points are based on a different methodology to the current Tariff.
- A key principle of the new UCAS Tariff is consistency and we have tried to ensure minimal disruption.
- All Level 3/SCQF Level 6 qualifications that are currently on the UCAS Tariff will continue to attract points under the new system.
- The AS has been repositioned as 40% of an A level in light of the qualification regulators' statements regarding the standard of the AS.
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Following a feedback exercise with the HE sector and secondary education community, in June 2014 the UCAS Board agreed that the new Tariff should be implemented from 2017-18 academic year.

Source: UCAS Tariff Tables [May 2015] <https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/new-tariff-tables.pdf>

2017 Tariff <https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

The new Tariff

The new Tariff operates as follows:

- Qualifications are allocated a size band of 1 to 4, based on their guided learning hours.
- Qualifications will also be allocated a grade band of 3 to 14. These grade bands spread across the breadth of Level 3/SCQF Level 6.
- The size band and grade band are then multiplied to form the overall Tariff score.

It is important to emphasise that the methodology behind the new Tariff is entirely different to the version developed in 2001. This means that points under the two systems are not comparable. For example:

Qualification and Grade	Current Tariff	New Tariff
A level grade A*	140	56
A level grade A	120	48
A level grade B	100	40
A level grade C	80	32
A level grade D	60	24
A level grade E	40	16

Pearson BTEC Extended Diploma (QCF)

Grade	Tariff points
D*D*D*	168
D*D*D	160
D*DD	152
DDD	144
DDM	128
DMM	112
MMM	96
MMP	80
MPP	64
PPP	48

Useful links:

Tariff resources for applicants

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/tariff/new-tariff>

Tariff resources for advisors

<https://www.ucas.com/advisers/guides-and-resources/tariff-2017>

