

Writtle University College Admissions Policy Statement for Higher Education

Admissions cycle 2020/21 for entry 2021

Head of Registry & Admissions October 2020

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1 Core admissions principles

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

<https://writtle.ac.uk/HE-Regulations-&Policies>

The Admissions Policy Statement for Higher Education underlies all activity that 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 and should be read in conjunction with the Writtle University College Higher Education Regulations and Policies <https://writtle.ac.uk/HE-Regulations-&Policies>

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 all 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.

Responsibility for this Policy rests with the WUC Academic Board.

2 Admissions process - overview

The University College operates a centralised Admissions Office to provide 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.

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.

Applications for part time study, postgraduate and further education courses should be made direct to the University College. All applications should be made through the central Admissions Office.

We welcome 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. 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 or 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.

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. 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 Design courses, applicants are encouraged to attend an interview which provides an opportunity to present a portfolio of art/design work.

3 Applicants with additional support needs/disabilities

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 that 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 admissions and 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 is likely to 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>

4 Admissions criteria and selection

The University College website and the UCAS website provide clear information and guidance on all WUC entry requirements, grades and subjects including G/VCE A-Level tariff scores, Access to HE Diploma, BTEC qualifications (QCF), NPTC, City and Guilds, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Diploma and Cambridge Pre-U, functional skills, GCSEs and 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. 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, 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.

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 any offers made.

5 Deferred Entry

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.

6 Interviews

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 admissions policy in relation to equality and diversity.

Interview dates, times and 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. If an applicant is under the age of 18 years of age at the time of the interview, necessary arrangements will be made under our Safeguarding Policy. 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.

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.

Following the interview, the outcome will be communicated normally with seven (7) working days from the date of interview. However, during busy periods, particularly during Christmas closure, 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.

Travel and accommodation costs incurred by the applicant when attending an interview will not normally be refunded.

7 Admissions tests

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

8 Portfolio guidelines

For courses in 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.

9 Contextual data

Since 2012 the University College has collected contextual applicant data via UCAS. Publicly available datasets from the government and other agencies, such as school/college A level performance, are collated and stored. Contextual

data may be used a part of the overall decision making process and will not be used in isolation. However, 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.

10 Offers

Following submission of an application, the applicant will be issued with an acknowledgement within two (2) 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 three (3) working days and offers dispatched electronically via UCAS, email and post. Any offer and/or subsequent registrations are made on the basis that 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.

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. The University College retains the right to withdraw an offer of a place or terminate the registration of a student should it subsequently come to light that the information provided by an applicant in support of their application was inaccurate or incomplete or a misrepresentation of the applicant's academic and other achievements.

11 Your right to cancel

Once an applicant has accepted an offer, they have the right to cancel the contract with the University College at any time within 14 days of the date that they formally accepted the offer. For the avoidance of doubt, the offer of a place will be confirmed on receipt of correspondence from the University College, which will be individually addressed to the applicant (and not when the applicant receives the electronic confirmation through UCAS). To exercise the right to cancel the applicant must notify the University College in writing, by either following the instructions provided by UCAS or writing to admissions@writtle.ac.uk confirm the wish to cancel.

12 Feedback to unsuccessful applicants

In order to support our transparent admissions process, the University College undertakes to provide appropriate and high quality feedback to unsuccessful applicants. 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.

UCAS has 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.

13 Applicant appeals and complaints procedure

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. Complaints or appeals should be submitted as soon as possible and no later than 30 days of the admissions decision being communicated to the applicant. The following link provides details of the admissions complaints and appeals procedure for applicants to Higher Education courses. <https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Higher-Education-Applicants-Complaints-and-Appeals-Procedure.pdf>

14 Confirmation of results

'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 is available to all students to keep up-to-date with the progress of their application and reply to offers.

15 Student Induction

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

16 Accreditation of prior and experiential learning (AP(E)L)

Applicants may be considered through the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) process, which may be certificated or experiential respectively. 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. An application for APEL is considered by the Credit Approvals Board. Staff and applicant guides on the APEL process are available. <https://writtle.ac.uk/HE-Regulations-&-Policies>

The University College welcomes degree 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.

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.

17 Fees and Finances

Information on all course related costs are clearly available on the course and financial pages of the University College website: <https://writtle.ac.uk/Finances>.

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.

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. The Admissions Team determines the tuition fee status of a student in accordance with UK government Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations, which state 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.

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

18 English Language Requirements

Applicants 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 1).

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 1). 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 1	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

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 student recruitment.

19 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 in the event that a concern is raised:

- 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 fourteen (14) days;

- 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 fourteen (14) days, a reminder will be sent to the applicant by the Head of Admissions, giving a further seven (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.

20 Discontinued or suspended courses

Occasionally the University College will need to suspend or withdraw a course in between an applicant accepting an offer and the course commencing. This may occur where we have received lower than anticipated application numbers to a particular course. In this scenario, it may be financially non-viable for WUC to run the course and we may not be able to guarantee the quality of the student experience. We appreciate the disappointment and disruption this can cause for applicants and we will make reasonable endeavours to avoid such action. Where it *is* necessary to suspend or withdraw a course, we will take that decision as early as possible.

Following a decision by the University College to suspend or withdraw a course of study, we commit to notifying all offer holders by email within 48 hours and all applicants within five (5) working days. Wherever possible we will offer a place on an alternative WUC course of study, subject to admissions requirements.

Where a home/EU applicant has indicated that they do *not* wish to accept an offer of an alternative course at WUC, we will update the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS) within 48 hours. Where an international applicant has indicated that they do *not* wish to accept an offer of an alternative course at WUC, we will refund in full any deposits paid by the applicant. Where necessary we will also withdraw any pending Tier 4 visa applications with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

21 Changes to course content or delivery

The University College is committed to providing accurate and appropriate pre-entry information and support to prospective students to enable them to make an informed decision about whether to apply for a course. We will do everything possible to avoid implementing any changes which significantly affect the content or delivery of your course at WUC. Where major changes are planned to a course, these will normally apply to future student intakes and will be reflected in the course information available to applicants. The need for us to make major changes to your course is only likely to occur in the event of sudden staffing changes or an unforeseen business continuity risk.

In the unlikely event that we deem it necessary to make major changes to a course after it has been advertised and once applications have been received, we will notify all applicants and offer holders within five (5) working days, explaining the nature of the changes made. Where the applicant decides to withdraw or cancel, the University College will take practical and reasonable steps to support them to transfer to an alternative course or institution.

22 Data protection and privacy

The University College will collect, store and process personal data in order to meet its obligations under the WUC Terms and Conditions and for the purposes stated in its Data Protection Policy and Fair Processing Notice. 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 2018.

https://writtle.ac.uk/pdfs/Data_Protection_Policy.pdf

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 2018.

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.

You have the right to access your personal data held on file by the University College. All such requests should be made in writing to dpo@writtle.ac.uk.

23 Record keeping

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.

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 (6) 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.