QAA

# Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education

## Section 10: Admissions to higher education - September 2006

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# Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Admissions to higher education

## Foreword

1 This document is the second edition of a code of practice for admissions to higher education in UK higher education institutions. It is one of a suite of interrelated documents which forms an overall *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*) for the guidance of organisations subscribing to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and other bodies offering UK higher education.

2 The overall *Code of practice* and its 10 constituent sections were originally prepared by QAA between 1998 and 2001 in response to the Reports of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education and its Scottish Committee (the *Dearing* and *Garrick Reports*). The *Code of practice* supports the national arrangements within the UK for quality assurance in higher education. It identifies a comprehensive series of system-wide principles (precepts) covering matters relating to the management of academic quality and standards in higher education. It provides an authoritative reference point for institutions as they consciously, actively and systematically assure the academic quality and standards of their programmes, awards and qualifications.

3 The *Code of practice* assumes that, taking into account principles and practices agreed UK-wide, each institution has its own systems for independent verification both of its quality and standards and of the effectiveness of its quality assurance systems. In developing the *Code of practice*, extensive advice has been sought from a range of knowledgeable practitioners.

4 The *Code of practice* does not incorporate statutory requirements relating to relevant legislation, for example the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001*. It assumes that institutions

have an overriding obligation in all such cases to ensure that they meet the requirements of legislation. However, where a section of the *Code of practice* is related to legislative or similar obligations, efforts have been made to ensure compatibility between them.

5 Since 2001 a number of developments in UK higher education have encouraged QAA to begin a revision of individual sections of the *Code of practice*. In undertaking this task QAA has also decided to review the structure of the sections and, in particular, to replace the original 'precepts and guidance' format with a 'precepts and explanation' approach, using the explanations to make clear why the precepts are considered important and reducing opportunities for a 'checklist' approach to the *Code of practice*. In doing so QAA has sought to meet Recommendation 4 (part 4) of the Better Regulation Task Force in its report *Higher Education: Easing the Burden*, July 2002. This revised section has also taken account of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.

6 Revised sections of the *Code of practice* are therefore now structured into a series of precepts and accompanying explanations. The precepts express key matters of principle that the higher education community has identified as important for the assurance of quality and academic standards. Individual institutions should be able to demonstrate they are addressing the matters tackled by the precepts effectively, through their own management and organisational processes, taking account of institutional needs, traditions, culture and decision-making. The accompanying explanations show why the precepts are important.

7 The *Code of practice* is a statement of good practice that has been endorsed by the higher education community. As such it is useful in QAA's audit and review processes that consider the extent to which an institution, in developing and implementing its own policies, has taken account of the *Code of practice* and its precepts.

8 Institutions may find the explanations useful for developing their own policy and for allowing some flexibility of practice at subject level, depending on local needs. It is important to emphasise that the explanations do not form part of QAA's expectations of institutional practice when QAA teams are conducting audits and reviews.

9 Academic staff in departments and schools do not necessarily need to be aware of the detail of all of the various sections of the *Code of practice*, although they might well be expected to be familiar with the institutional policies it informs and any parts which are particularly relevant to their own responsibilities.

10 To assist users, the precepts are listed, without the accompanying explanations, in Appendix 1 to this section of the *Code of practice*.

11 The first version of this section of the *Code of practice* was published in September 2001. The publication of this second version follows consultation with staff in institutions, who have helped to update the *Code of practice* to take account of institutions' practical experience of using the guidance contained in its predecessor.

## Introduction

12 The *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education* is intended to help institutions to assure themselves and others that the policies and procedures they use to attract, recruit, select, admit and enroll students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.

13 The admission of students to higher education is a complex process of interrelated activities. These activities typically include the:

- promotion and marketing of courses to prospective students, their parents, employers and advisers
- identification and recruitment of prospective students to an institution and specific programmes of study through, for example, open days; recruitment fairs; taster days; and summer schools
- selection of applicants suitable for a particular programme
- offer of a place on a programme of study
- enrolment of students onto a programme of study
- induction and orientation of new students to the institution, department, school or faculty and programme of study.

14 For the purpose of this document, 'admissions to higher education' is used as a generic term to encapsulate all activities, policies, procedures and practices involved in the process of admitting students to higher education. The *Code of practice* is applicable to all admissions to higher education institutions, including undergraduate, postgraduate, UK and international applicants from both within and outside the European Union (EU).

15 The context in which admissions to higher education take place changes over time and differs at any one time between institutions and across subject areas; it is influenced by the supply of, and the demand for, places. However, the *Code of practice* is based on broad principles that should apply to all circumstances and market

conditions in which applicants are recruited and selected. It does not specify the criteria to be used for selection but it encourages each institution to ensure that its own policies and procedures are operated consistently and effectively.

16 The broad principles are set out in the precepts of the *Code of practice*. The explanatory text, which supports the precepts, illustrates the actions an institution may consider taking in order to assure itself that it is operating within the expectations set out in the precepts. Some aspects of the guidance are likely to be of particular relevance to applications for particular programmes, while other aspects of the guidance might be relevant to a particular application, according to when and how that application is received and considered.

17 Applicants to a higher education system that caters for mass participation will come from a wide range of backgrounds, and will demonstrate their potential to succeed in a variety of ways. Admissions policies need to address the making of quite complex judgements about relative potential within a diverse population of applicants. Each institution will wish to set and implement admissions policies that are consistent with its particular mission and that are fair, lawful and have regard to the reasonable expectations prospective students have of the admissions process.

18 Policies and practices for student admissions should be designed to secure a good match between the abilities and aptitudes of the applicant and the demands of the programme, thus leading to the selection of students who can reasonably be expected to complete their studies successfully. Those making admissions decisions need to discriminate between applicants, to determine who should be selected. This requires an exercise of judgement; it is important that this is underpinned by reference to transparent and justifiable criteria.

19 Admissions policies typically address how complex judgements should be made, especially when applicants with a variety of capabilities come from a diversity of backgrounds. The *Code of*

*practice* encourages institutions to be explicit about the reasons behind the principles and practices attached to their admissions policies and the benefits resulting from their implementation. Finally, the *Code of practice* recognises as good practice regular monitoring and review of recruitment, admissions, and enrolment policies and procedures, as well as the development of appropriate institutional means of ensuring that all those involved in admissions are competent to undertake their roles.

20 Across the wide spectrum of applications that comprise a substantial part of higher education institutions' admissions work, the policies and procedures relating to them are developed and assured solely by each institution. Within this, the *Code of practice* addresses the fact that in admissions to some programmes, regulation of the admissions process is influenced by the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), or sponsoring bodies, as well as by higher education institutions themselves. The *Code of practice* also recognises that many higher education institutions will make use of admissions schemes such as the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which has its own procedures and rules, agreed by its members. Institutions are, of course, also expected to conform to the requirements of relevant legislation such as that covering human rights, data protection, race relations, age discrimination and equality of opportunity. Each institution will wish to incorporate relevant aspects of such schemes, requirements and legislation to set and implement policies that are built on fair and transparent practice.

21 Users of the *Code of practice* are also recommended to refer to other sections, in particular *Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes* (September 2004); *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* (September 2004); *Section 3: Students with disabilities* (October 1999); *Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters* (March 2000); and to QAA's *Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning* (September 2004).

## Precepts and explanations

### General principles

**1**
**Institutions have policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students to higher education that are fair, clear and explicit and are implemented consistently.**

Institutions' policies and procedures that reflect the admissions process in its entirety for all categories of student, including full and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate study, will help to demonstrate that policies and procedures are fair and can be implemented consistently. Policies and procedures that provide clear and explicit information about how applications from prospective UK and international students, from both within and outside the EU, are appropriately accommodated in the recruitment and admission process will also help an institution to assure itself that its policies are being implemented consistently.

Clearly articulating where within the institution the responsibility lies for each part of the admissions process will help institutions to be fair and consistent in the implementation of its policies. For example, which body has responsibility and authority for determining the number of offers to be made relative to the number of places available, the setting of criteria against which applicants will be considered, and the selection of applicants themselves. Institutions may also wish to consider including in their policies and procedures information about the responsibilities and obligations of applicants and students within the admissions process. This may include how an institution will respond to applications that include fraudulent or false information.

Institutions will wish to consider how the diverse background, experience and age of applicants and different modes of study available can be appropriately reflected in its policies and procedures. In devising their policies and procedures institutions will wish to provide for equality of opportunity for all applicants within the selection criteria established for each programme.

Ensuring that all procedures and policies can be effectively implemented in relation to study undertaken in collaboration with other providers and operate in particular circumstances, such as Clearing, will help an institution to demonstrate that their procedures and policies are fair, clear, explicit and are implemented consistently.

Once policies and procedures have been established, institutions will want to consider which elements might best and most informatively be presented to applicants, their advisers and agents.

**2**
**Institutions' decisions regarding admissions to higher education are made by those equipped to make the required judgements and competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.**

All staff involved at each stage of the admissions process, including those of partner organisations, external advisers and agents, need to be informed about the institution's policies, procedures and criteria for student admissions to higher education. All staff associated with student admissions will benefit from having clearly and explicitly defined roles. Staff will need to be aware of which stage(s) in the admissions process they might contribute to. Full details of all roles and responsibilities should be available to all associated staff.

Higher education institutions should ensure that all staff at all levels of the admissions process, including those of partner organisations, are adequately informed, appropriately trained and supported to undertake their role(s).

Institutions should consider the level and mixture of staff expertise required to develop, implement, monitor and revise the institution's admissions policies and procedures. Applicants, stakeholders and the institution will wish to be reassured that those staff required to make judgements about student admissions have the appropriate skills to participate in the selection of prospective students, including undertaking interviews, auditions or assessment of an applicant's practical/vocational skills.

This may be assisted by ensuring that all staff involved in the admissions process, and particularly those involved in making selection and recruitment decisions, have an understanding of the potential for bias that can arise from educational and cultural differences. Appropriate arrangements should also be made for updating staff knowledge and understanding of the differing routes into higher education and consideration given to how staff may best engage in the regular sharing of good practice in admissions, locally and nationally. This may necessitate considering how staff may take advantage of opportunities for contact with schools, further education institutions, workplace training providers and career advisers.

## Recruitment and selection

**3**
**Institutions' promotional materials and activities are accurate, relevant, current, accessible and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.**

Applicants to higher education will benefit from having access to various types of information at different times during the admissions process. Institutions offer a range of materials and activities designed to assist potential applicants in making informed decisions about their options. Institutions will wish to consider the format most appropriate to the full range of potential applicants, when and how information on a range of matters is made available. For example, programme specifications and entry profiles, including those provided through UCAS, or comparable information, such as postgraduate directories, can provide useful information for prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students, respectively. It may be useful for institutions to consider how the various sources of information are made known to prospective students, which information should be issued routinely and at which stage of the admissions process, and which should be made publicly available or only on request.

Information about the range, content, structure, organisation and the main learning and teaching methods which are employed in each programme can help prospective students to select the most appropriate programme, mode of study and route or pathway to their strengths and interests. The extent of flexibility and choice within the curriculum design and the assessment procedures adopted within individual programmes, including any opportunities for credit transfer and/or the accreditation of prior learning, if it is made clear and readily available, can assist prospective students to make informed decisions about their options.

Institutions and PSRBs will wish to make it clear to prospective students which programmes are accredited and/or approved by a PSRB. Prospective students will also find it helpful for institutions' promotional material and activities to include information about any particular requirements on application, for example, the enhanced disclosure of medical or criminal records. Providing prospective students with information about what levels of access to membership of the PSRB are provided on successful completion of the programme can also help students to plan for their future career and study options.

Prospective students will appreciate being informed about the range of welfare, guidance and support services (pastoral and academic) that are available for all students and services that are available for those with particular needs. Institutions may wish to consider how and when information about accessing these services is provided to applicants and prospective students.

In addition to full and accurate information about all fees and associated costs of studying a particular programme, prospective students may find it helpful for institutions to include information on the availability of institutional specific advice and sources of financial support.

Institutions will also want to consider carefully how any special application and support arrangements for any specific category of applicant, be they from the UK, elsewhere in the EU or from outside

the EU, are reflected in their policies and procedures and how these are communicated to prospective students their advisers and agents.

In order to assist prospective students in making informed choices and decisions, institutions may wish to consider how information about opportunities to gather further information about a programme, visit the institution or gain experience of higher education are provided. Information about, for example, any institution, department, faculty or school open days, summer schools or other opportunities for prospective students to meet current students and staff, can raise awareness about the opportunities to ask questions and gain clarification about a specific issue of particular interest to an individual applicant.

**4**

**Institutions' selection policies and procedures are clear and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously. Transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgements made during the selection process for entry.**

A range of evidence may be considered when judgements are made about the potential of an applicant to succeed on a particular programme. Institutions may wish to consider the abilities, aptitudes, skills, qualifications, other prior learning and experiences, including that achieved in the workplace, of prospective students that would indicate their merit and potential to succeed on each programme. Careful consideration of the reliability, relevance and validity of the methods used to gather evidence about an applicants merit and potential to succeed, will help institutions to assure themselves that their selection policies and procedures are fair and implemented consistently.

In developing their selection policies and procedures, institutions should be clear and open about the reliance placed on, and relative contribution of, prior academic achievement (demonstrated for example by examination results and qualifications), the results of

additional testing or assessment (including the purpose, conduct and outcome of interviews, auditions and assessment of skill), and potential and relevant capabilities demonstrated by other means.

In assessing merit and potential to succeed, or in discriminating between candidates with broadly equivalent educational achievement, institutions give careful consideration to the different ways by which the desired characteristics might be demonstrated, for example, personal initiative or teamworking ability. Such evidence often comes from involvement in sporting, artistic or voluntary activities, or from employment. In making such judgements, institutions need to be sensitive to the extent to which applicants have had opportunities to participate in such activities, and to acknowledge that, in a culturally diverse society, there are many ways in which such characteristics might be demonstrated. It is also useful to remember that opportunities to participate in such activities can be limited by a range of factors such as disability and social background.

Institutions should consider how factors determining entry and selection are agreed and monitored across the institution to ensure they are in line with the institution's mission. Similarly, once they are included in institution policy, consideration should be given to how these factors are communicated to applicants and all who contribute to the selection decision.

The specific procedures to be followed, where additional criteria need to be considered in the selection process, such as those relating to medical and criminal records, as required by some PSRBs, should be clear to all who contribute to the selection decision. The purpose, use and contribution of this information to the selection decision should be clearly communicated to applicants.

When developing their policies and procedures for the selection of applicants, institutions should give consideration to how decisions and the reasons for those decisions are recorded and the approach to be followed in any communication to applicants about the reasons.

**5**
**Institutions conduct their admissions processes efficiently, effectively and courteously according to fully documented operational procedures that are readily accessible to all those involved in the admissions process, both within and without the institution, applicants and their advisers.**

Institutions may find it helpful to identify, in their operational procedures, each stage of the admissions process, from initial receipt of an application, through decision processing, to final registration of a successful applicant as a student. The identification of responsibilities and authority for the conduct of the various elements of the admissions process will be important to the efficient and effective implementation of the procedures.

Institutions may receive applications from a range of sources, including those submitted via admissions schemes such as UCAS. When determining the procedures for handling received applications, it may be useful for institutions to consider the appropriate timescales for processing an application; this may also usefully include setting time limits on keeping information about applicants.

Institutions will want to give careful consideration in their admissions procedures to whether and how statements confirming that information about applicants remains confidential between designated parties, and to the inclusion of a declaration, signed by applicants, authorising the release of information to these designated parties[1]. Establishing procedures for responding to enquiries from other parties for information about an application can help to improve the consistency of operating the institutions procedures and enhance confidence in the process.

[1] Institutions might find it helpful to consider the assurances given to applicants by UCAS; see Appendix 2.

## Information to applicants

**6**
**Institutions inform applicants of the obligations placed on prospective students at the time the offer of a place is made.**

It is in both the institution's and prospective students' interests for applicants to be informed fully about the procedures, both the institution's and any admissions scheme's, they should follow if they wish to take up the offer of a place, or if they do not wish to take up an offer. Applicants will also find it helpful to be provided with clear information about the action they should take if they do not achieve the results and/or meet the criteria specified in the offer of a place.

Applicants are required to make important choices and decisions during the admissions process. To assist applicants in making informed and timely decisions, institutions are encouraged to consider the extent, format and timing of information and guidance it makes available to applicants, once an offer of a place has been made. Such information may include, for example, institutions' regulations to which students are subject. For postgraduate students particularly, this may also include clarification of the rights to intellectual property developed while a student of the institution.

Applicants may request a deferral of entry to a later year, and the procedures for making this request should be clear and readily available. The subsequent process to be followed by the institution in considering this request should also be clear. The decision to grant or decline a request for deferred entry to a later year should, similar to the decisions made about the initial selection of applicants, be based on transparent criteria.

**7**
**Institutions inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place is made and registration is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances.**

Occasionally, institutions find it necessary to make changes to a programme between the time the offer of a place on that programme is made and the registration of students is complete. Under such circumstances, institutions should ensure that they inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of the changes. Institutions will wish to take all reasonable and necessary steps to support the applicant and ensure that they advise prospective students of proposed amendments and arrangements and/or alternative options available.

Typically, alterations are due to staff changes that may result in significant amendment to the content of a programme, such as the withdrawal of modules or significant alterations to the teaching, learning or assessment arrangements for the programme. Other significant changes may include alterations to the status of a programme, including, for example, the withdrawal or granting of validation by a PSRB or the failure of an advertised programme to gain approval or accreditation; the cost or location of the programme; and the suspension or discontinuation of the programme.

Institutions may also find it helpful to refer to section 7 of the UCAS *Admissions Guide* which provides advice on informing students of changes to a programme and covers the UCAS procedures to be followed if an institution is either unable to offer a course or is introducing a new course during the admissions cycle.

**8**
**Institutions explain to applicants who have accepted a place arrangements for the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote efficient and effective integration of entrants fully as students.**

All new entrants will require coordinated and consistent information related to the institution and the department, unit or faculty with which they will be studying; learning support services available, including details of information technology and library services; study skills; personal tutorial support; and student welfare and personal development planning.

The diverse needs of any particular student group, which might typically include students with disabilities, international students, those whose first language is not English, mature students and full-time, part-time and work-based students, will need to be accommodated in arrangements for the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new students. Institutions in Wales may also wish to consider QAA's *Guidelines for higher education institutions in Wales for effective practice in examining and assessing in a language other than the language of tuition* (September 2003).

Additionally, it would be helpful to students who may have particular needs for learning support, for example, those who have been away from study for a period and those who may have a need to enhance specific skills, to have these needs identified at an early stage so that the necessary support can be provided.

Institutions will need to consider at what stage in the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new entrants the various information needs of new students can be most effectively met. In addition to determining the structure, content and presentation of information, institutions will need to consider arrangements for the integration of new entrants and whether this is best achieved, for example, through the provision of formal induction programmes by the institution, individual departments or a combination of methods.

**9**
**Institutions consider the most effective and efficient arrangements for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.**

Institutions will want to give careful consideration to how they inform prospective students that their application has been unsuccessful. Institutions will also wish to consider the nature and extent of feedback available to unsuccessful applicants.

How feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants, for example, whether it is provided routinely or on request only, should be made clear to applicants as early as possible in the admissions process. Prospective students and applicants will need to be made aware of any time limits within which they may make a request for feedback on an unsuccessful application, and the procedures to follow if they are able to provide any additional information pertinent to the application.

In order to provide effective feedback to unsuccessful applicants, institutions may find it helpful to consider how they record the decision-making process and reasons for selecting or not selecting a candidate. Institutions may also wish to consider to what extent they are able to offer advice to unsuccessful applicants about alternatives and future options for study.

## Complaints and appeals

**10**
**Institutions have policies and procedures in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of their admissions process and ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the policies and procedures.**

In considering their complaints handling policies, institutions may wish to determine in the first instance whether, and if so how, their general complaints policies and procedures can be applied to complaints made about the admissions process.

Policies and procedures concerned with complaints about admissions processes should be appropriate and fair. Information provided by applicants and staff involved in admissions may assist institutions in identifying whether or not revisions to their existing policies may be required.

Institutions should consider how and at what stage in the admissions process they inform applicants about their complaints policies and procedures and how they record and monitor the receipt and outcome of complaints.

**11**
**Institutions have policies in place for responding to applicants' appeals against the outcome of a selection decision that make clear to all staff and applicants whether, and if so, on what grounds, any such appeals may be considered.**

In considering their policies for responding to appeals made by applicants, institutions may wish to determine in the first instance whether, and if so how, their existing appeals policies and procedures can be applied to appeals against the outcome of a selection decisions.

The appropriateness of appeals policies and procedures to applicants compared to enrolled students may inform institutions about whether existing appeals procedures are considered appropriate, whether revisions are required to accommodate responses to appeals against the outcome of a selection decision or whether the development of policies and procedures specific to appeals about the outcome of selection decisions are required.

Institutions should consider how and at what stage in the admissions process they inform applicants whether appeals against the outcome of a selection/admissions decision will be considered, the procedures, circumstances and criteria for making and considering any such appeal and how they record and monitor the receipt and outcome of appeals.

Institutions may find it helpful to explain to potential appellants the difference between a complaint about the administration of their

admissions policies and procedures and an appeal against the outcome of a selection/admission decision.

Institutions and potential appellants will find it helpful to have clear, explicit criteria for entry, clearly documented procedures for the application of these criteria, careful recording of decisions and the reasons for the decisions taken, and opportunities for applicants to receive feedback following an unsuccessful application.

For a fuller discussion on the distinction between complaints and appeals, refer to the *Code of practice, Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters*.

## Monitoring and review of policies and procedures

**12**
**Institutions regularly review their policies and procedures related to student admissions to higher education to ensure that they continue to support the mission and strategic objectives of the institution, and that they remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances.**

Periodic reviews of admissions policies and procedures might consider the experience of operating policies, procedures and criteria in relation to the changing patterns in the applicant market; changes in the pattern of availability of, and demand for, different modes of study; and changes in the nature of the main qualifications offered by applicants.

The expectations of student achievement represented by qualification framework descriptors and subject benchmark statements, and legal rights and obligations relevant to the admissions process will also inform any revision to an institution's policies and procedures.

In addition, and where relevant, institutions may also wish to consider identifying and accounting for any differences in admissions procedures between subjects, departments and faculties.

Similarly, monitoring the application of admissions policies to programmes provided through franchise or other collaborative arrangements with other institutions will provide institutions with a wealth of comparative data that may be supported by monitoring the effectiveness of articulation or other arrangements that allow students to enter programmes with advanced standing.

By monitoring the use and relative effectiveness of recruitment materials and activities such as pre-entry information and guidance, attendance at summer schools, 'junior universities' and face-to-face pre-entry meetings, institutions will be better informed about their usefulness in attracting suitable applicants. Institutions may also find it useful to consider whether, and if so how, they may best take account of surveys of applicants, be they undertaken by the institution of its own applicants or externally by other organisations. The routine monitoring and review of student progression and retention rates, withdrawal and transfer, and reasons for non-completion can further provide institutions with a better understanding of the effectiveness of their overall admissions procedures.

# Appendix 1

## The precepts

(Note: the precepts are printed here without explanatory text for ease of reference.)

### General principles

**1**
**Institutions have policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students to higher education that are fair, clear and explicit and are implemented consistently.**

**2**
**Institutions' decisions regarding admissions to higher education are made by those equipped to make the required judgements and competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.**

### Recruitment and selection

**3**
**Institutions' promotional materials and activities are accurate, relevant, current, accessible and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.**

**4**
**Institutions' selection policies and procedures are clear and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously. Transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgements made during the selection process for entry.**

**5**
**Institutions conduct their admissions processes efficiently, effectively and courteously according to fully documented operational procedures that are readily accessible to all those involved in the admissions process, both within and without the institution, applicants and their advisers.**

## Information to applicants

**6**
**Institutions inform applicants of the obligations placed on prospective students at the time the offer of a place is made.**

**7**
**Institutions inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place is made and registration is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances.**

**8**
**Institutions explain to applicants who have accepted a place arrangements for the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote efficient and effective integration of entrants fully as students.**

**9**
**Institutions consider the most effective and efficient arrangements for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.**

## Complaints and appeals

**10**
**Institutions have policies and procedures in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of their admissions process and ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the policies and procedures.**

**11**
**Institutions have policies in place for responding to applicants' appeals against the outcome of a selection decision that make clear to all staff and applicants whether, and if so, on what grounds, any such appeals may be considered.**

## Monitoring and review of policies and procedures

**12**
**Institutions regularly review their policies and procedures related to student admissions to higher education to ensure that they continue to support the mission and strategic objectives of the institution, and that they remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances.**

# Appendix 2

## UCAS guidance on confidentiality

UCAS confirms that applications are normally confidential between:

i the applicant

ii the UCAS group of companies

iii the referee

iv the appropriate staff at the universities and colleges to which the applicant has applied

v the applicant's school, college or training organisation

vi the applicant's parents, where appropriate

vii the examination board or awarding body

viii the student support assessment body

ix the Student Loans Company, and

x in the case of international applicants, the British Council or appropriate agency.

However, UCAS tries to detect and prevent fraud, and has the right to give outside organisations, including the Police, the Home Office, local authorities, examination boards or awarding bodies, and the Department for Work and Pensions and its agencies, information from the applicant's form.

# Appendix 3

## Membership of the advisory group

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr Jennifer Barnes | Director of Education Worldwide, BP plc (formerly Assistant Principal (Academic) & Dean of Studies, Trinity College of Music) |
| Janet Bohrer | Development Officer, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education |
| Chris Burdon | formerly Director, Academic Affairs, University of Keele |
| Steve Cannon | Secretary to the University, University of Aberdeen |
| Delyth Chambers | Director, Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation, The University of Manchester and Chair, Russell Group Admissions Officers Committee |
| Kath Dentith | Assistant Director, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education |
| Ana Hidalgo-Kingston | Head of Admissions, University of Sheffield |
| Stephen Marshall | Academic Registrar, Oxford Brookes University |
| Anthony McClaran | Chief Executive, Universities and Colleges Admissions Service |
| Dr Claire Mera-Nelson | Head of Postgraduate Programmes & Research and Dean of Studies, Trinity College of Music, Trinity Laban |

| | |
|---|---|
| Jane Minto | Director, The Oxford Colleges Admissions Office, University of Oxford |
| Dr Jayne Mitchell | Assistant Director, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education |
| Dr Sofija Opacic | Higher Education Policy and Research Analyst, National Union of Students |
| Steve Phillips | formerly Senior Policy Advisor, Standing Conference of Principals |
| John Ryan | Registrar, University of Worcester |
| Clare Taylor | Policy Officer, Universities UK |

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