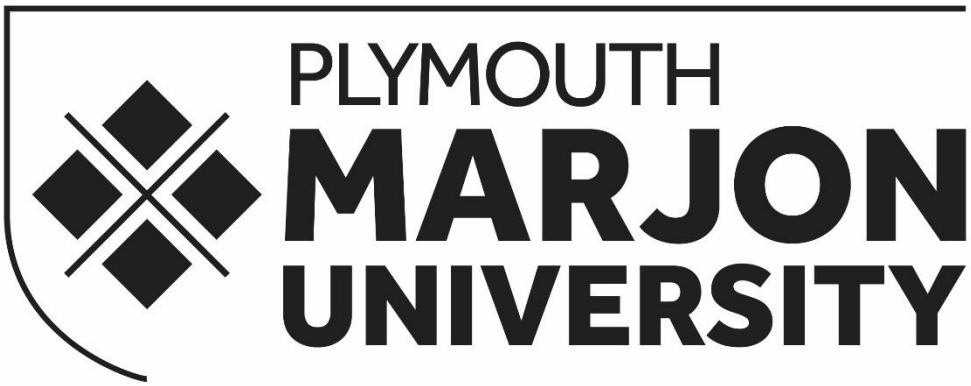

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Admissions Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the principles, responsibilities, and procedures for admitting applicants to study on a course awarded by Plymouth Marjon University. It ensures decisions are fair, transparent, consistent, and in line with the University's strategic objectives and legal obligations.

The Admissions Policy and Procedures document contains the:

- Admissions Policy stating the aims and intentions of the University in relation to the admission of students and interviews;
- Procedures stating the means, by which, those aims and intentions are to be achieved[1].

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All modes and levels of study (undergraduate, postgraduate, degree apprenticeship, full-time, part-time, distance learning, taught, research).
- Home and international applicants.
- Direct entry, partner, advanced entry, and internal transfer applicants.
- Credit-bearing programmes only.

3. Principles

In line with its Mission and Vision, the University is committed to:

- Widening participation and improving access to higher education.
- Embedding the Fair Admissions Code of Practice.
- Treating all applicants equitably, regardless of background.
- Making admissions decisions based on merit, potential, and the ability to succeed.
- Complying with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, UKVI regulations, and GDPR. The relevant legislation is listed in Appendix 1 and is embedded within the relevant University Strategies, Policies, Procedures and Schemes listed in Appendix 2.

[1] The Admissions Policy & Procedures 2025 supersedes all previous versions of the Admissions Policy & Procedures and the Student Programme Compliance Policy.

Through the Admissions Policy and Procedures, the University will ensure:

- applicants are treated fairly, respectfully with equal consideration
- the overall balance of the student population reflects that of the wider community
- applicants are appropriately supported and guided through the process
- transparent and fair decision making
- the University's strategic objectives are recognised
- the University provides a quality applicant experience.

Decisions about who is offered a place at the University are based on whether the applicant is likely to successfully complete their chosen course and benefit from it. We look at a range of evidence, including academic achievements, personal background, professional experience, and wider contributions to society.

Some courses have extra entry requirements linked to the subject area. These are based on what the course needs, guidance from academic leads, and any requirements from relevant professional or regulatory bodies. Wherever possible, we aim to offer part-time study options, although this depends on the specific course. More information about this can be found on the University's website.

The University welcomes applications from everyone. We do not exclude anyone based on legally protected characteristics, including: age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, being married or in a civil partnership, or being pregnant or on maternity leave.

Applicants with disabilities are assessed fairly using the same criteria as all other applicants, unless the course has professional requirements that must also be met. If you are offered a place, our Disability and Inclusion Advice Service (DIAS) will contact you through Admissions to discuss any support you may need before you start the course.

Applicants who have criminal convictions will be considered carefully. You may be asked to give full details of any past convictions. Having a criminal record doesn't automatically prevent you from studying here. We will look at each case individually, based on the type of offence and the nature of the course. However, the University may refuse a place if a conviction could pose a risk to others or affect the safety, security, or reputation of the University community. This applies to all courses, including those that are or are not professionally accredited.

4. Authority and responsibility

The University's admissions process follows this Admissions Policy and the related Procedures, which make up the rules for how admissions are handled.

The Admissions Team will make all admissions decisions, with advice from the academic programme leader or recommendations from partners, where required, except where authority to make admissions decisions has been explicitly devolved to a partner by formal agreement.

All University staff, professional and academic, involved in admissions must follow the Admissions Policy and Procedures. This also applies to staff at partner organisations if the University has delegated admissions responsibilities to them through an agreement.

5. Support and Review

The University makes sure all staff involved in admissions decisions receive regular training and updates.

The Admissions Policy and Procedures are available to all staff, students, and applicants on the University website as part of the Academic Strategies and Policies section.

The Admissions Policy and Procedures are reviewed whenever needed to keep up with changes in regulations or the University's strategy.

Admissions Procedures

1. Applicant Support

The University is committed to providing clear information and support to both potential and actual applicants, helping them make informed choices at the right stages of the admissions process using different types of media.

Every year, the University gives accurate and up-to-date information about its academic and support services (like accommodation, finance, library, and IT) to all those who enquire or apply, including details on entry requirements, fees, and student regulations at key points during the admissions cycle.

The University shares specific application information with applicants through UCAS (or other relevant services), the University prospectus, printed materials, the University website, and other digital channels.

The University offers a range of interactive events, such as Applicant Days, Open Days, recruitment fairs, and an online presence. The University is always adapting to provide new interactive opportunities for potential applicants.

The University provides access to external performance information, as well as its own Admissions Policies, Procedures, and supporting documents, either on request or through online resources on its website.

The University ensures that any updates about admissions decisions (including deferrals) and programme changes are communicated to prospective students as soon as possible.

The University provides all relevant information about registration, induction, and orientation at the right time to help applicants integrate smoothly into university life.

2. Communication with Applicants

All official communication is made in writing, via email, or applicant portals including (but not limited to) UCAS and the DfE, or directly via formal written correspondence. Offers include details of academic conditions or confirmation if the applicant is already pre-qualified.

Applicants receive confirmation of receipt of their application, requests for additional information, and final decisions, via email.

Interviewers and assessors must not make verbal or informal offers at any stage.

3. Application Routes

Applicants may apply through one of the following:

- **UCAS** – for most full-time undergraduate programmes.
- **Direct Application** – for part-time undergraduate, postgraduate and some specialist courses.
- **Direct Application (partner)** – for international applicants requiring a visa and applications submitted through a partner.

Application routes are clearly listed on course webpages. Applicants must meet published deadlines and requirements.

4. Entry requirements

The University sets its entry requirements and selects students based on consistency, fairness, transparency, and excellent customer service.

The admission requirements for each programme are listed in the University's Regulations for Academic Awards (Section 8 of the Student Regulation Framework). If applicants can't provide the required evidence, they can submit alternative proof that shows they have the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed for the programme.

Any changes to policy or entry requirements must be approved by the University's senior authority and communicated within the University and to applicants at the right time during the admissions process.

Programme leaders recommend specific entry criteria (such as interviews or portfolios) based on the needs of the programme, and they clearly explain why these requirements exist.

The University allows admission with credit, setting limits on how much credit can count towards a qualification. Applicants seeking admission with credit must follow the outlined procedures, and the Admissions and Registry teams are informed of the outcome, including any modules that can be exempted. See section 18 – Recognised Prior Learning.

The University aims to respond to applications within 10 working days. If this isn't going to happen, the relevant parties will be notified.

The University only uses personal data for lawful purposes, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Data is used for the purposes explained at the time of collection and shared with relevant partners involved in the admissions process. Third parties must keep this data confidential and cannot use it for anything else. Sensitive

personal information will only be shared with explicit consent from the applicant, except in cases where authorities request it for legal reasons.

5. Contextual Offer-making

At Plymouth Marjon University, we are committed to fair access and widening participation in higher education. We acknowledge that not all applicants have the same opportunities to reach their full academic potential, as personal circumstances and background can significantly influence their achievements. Our Contextual Offer Policy is designed to ensure that applicants are assessed fairly, and that we recognise potential, not just predicted or achieved results.

What is a Contextual Offer?

A contextual offer is a reduced offer of admission, typically one or two grades below the standard entry requirement, made in recognition of the additional challenges some applicants may face in accessing higher education.

This approach supports our mission to widen access and reduce barriers for students from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds and its mission to end social inequity.

Who is Eligible?

Contextual offers are only available to applicants who meet **all** of the following conditions:

- Apply through UCAS for Year 1 entry to an undergraduate degree programme;
- Are eligible for Home fee status[2];
- Are currently studying Level 3 qualifications on the UCAS tariff (such as A levels, BTECs or Access to HE Diplomas);
- Are not applying for a course delivered through a partner institution;
- Not applying to join a course that is at the same level or lower than the one they already hold (ELQ).

Contextual Offer Criteria

Applicants who meet **one or more** of the following criteria will be considered for a contextual offer:

[2] UKCISA guidance sets out eligibility criteria

1. Live in an area classified as highly deprived (Index of Multiple Deprivation [IMD] quintiles 1 or 2).
2. Live in an area with low progression to higher education (POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2).
3. Have received Free School Meals (FSM) at any point during schooling.
4. Are care-experienced, a care leaver, or estranged from family.
5. Have regular caring responsibilities for a family member or someone else.
6. Have a parent or carer who is serving or has served in the UK armed forces.
7. Have declared a disability on their UCAS application.
8. Have Refugee Status, or another form of humanitarian protection with which they are eligible for Home fee status,
9. Are currently studying an Access to HE Diploma through a recognised provider.

How Are Contextual Offers Made?

Contextual data is reviewed alongside your academic achievements, personal statement, and reference. Where eligible, a contextual offer will be made automatically. There is no need to submit a separate application for consideration.

In some cases, the Admissions Team may contact you for clarification or additional information. Data will be verified using national datasets where applicable.

Confidentiality and Use of Data

All contextual information is handled in line with the university's data protection policy. It is used solely for admissions purposes and does not affect how you are treated after enrolment. This information will not be visible to academic staff once your place is confirmed.

Further Support

We encourage applicants who believe they may be eligible or who have questions about the process to contact the Admissions Team for advice and guidance.

6. Interviews, Portfolios, and Auditions

Some courses, particularly professionally accredited ones, may require interviews if there are legal or regulatory requirements or if it is deemed the best way to assess suitability. Interviews are conducted by trained staff using predefined criteria, and the outcomes are formally recorded in the admissions system. No offer should be made verbally or implied during the interview.

Applicants will only be interviewed once per admissions cycle for a course, and may not be interview through UCAS Extra or Clearing for a course which shares the previously completed interview structure. Selection procedures will be consistent across all University partnerships.

If candidates are known to staff personally, the staff member will not participate in the selection process and must declare any conflict of interest.

Interviews are scheduled flexibly, with adequate notice (usually at least two weeks) and alternative dates offered where possible. Interviews should be conducted by at least two interviewers, with gender balance where possible, and interviewers should have received appropriate training.

Applicants can request adjustments for any additional requirements they have before the interview, and identity verification will be carried out for both onsite and remote interviews. Interviewers are expected to conduct themselves appropriately, avoiding aggressive questioning or inappropriate topics. Any interview records are confidential and stored securely, following data protection guidelines.

After the interview, applicants will be informed of the University's final decision on their applications, usually within 10 working days. Applicants can request feedback from their interview from the Admissions Team in writing. The University reserves the right to amend procedures in line with new legislation and best practices.

Where required, applicants must submit portfolios or attend auditions. Course-specific guidance is provided on content, format, and deadlines. Failure to meet these requirements may result in an unsuccessful application.

7. Applicants Requiring a Visa

Applicants requiring a student visa must:

- Meet all UKVI requirements.
- Provide valid passport and visa documentation.
- Demonstrate sufficient funds.
- Comply with Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) where applicable.
- Satisfy English language requirements.

A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) will only be issued once conditions are met.

8. Fee Status Assessment

All applicants are assessed for tuition fee status (Home or International) and right to study using UKCISA guidance. Applicants must supply accurate and complete information upon request to enable an assessment to be made. Incomplete information may delay the offer or result in an incorrect fee assessment.

9. Criminal Convictions and Safeguarding

Applicants must disclose any relevant criminal convictions, including both spent and unspent convictions, where legally required, as well as any pending criminal proceedings or charges.

For courses involving direct contact with children or vulnerable adults (such as those in education, healthcare, or social work), a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is mandatory prior to admission. Applicants may also be required to disclose any social care interventions, safeguarding concerns, or other relevant legal restrictions, such as social care orders or restrictions placed by local authorities.

The University reserves the right to refuse admission on safeguarding grounds following a thorough and proportionate risk assessment. This process will consider the nature, relevance, and context of the disclosed information in relation to the course of study, including any placements or professional requirements. The University may also seek advice from external safeguarding professionals or regulatory bodies where appropriate. Failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of an offer or termination of enrolment.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

The University complies with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice (November 2015). The rules regarding the automatic disclosure of cautions and convictions on a DBS certificate are set out in legislation.

All offers of places by the University to courses which have been identified as involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults in a ‘Regulated Activity’ will be made conditional to receipt of a satisfactory DBS certificate.

A DBS check application pack will be sent to applicants by the Admissions team once the offer of a place has been firmly accepted on professional courses or when the students are registered for other courses. Applicants who choose the University as their second choice will be advised of the need to provide a satisfactory check before they commence their studies with us. Clearing applicants will also be offered

places conditional upon a satisfactory DBS check. For non-professional courses, packs will be sent after registration during the first Semester of study.

The DBS offers a confidential checking process for transgender applicants. This process is for transgender applicants who do not wish to reveal details of their previous identity to the person who asked them to complete an application form for a DBS check. For more information about the transgender process, email sensitive@dbs.gov.uk or see the DBS Transgender Applications guidance.

Existing Enhanced DBS certificates processed by other institutions will not be accepted unless the certificate has been registered with the DBS Update Service. The applicant must provide the Admissions team with a copy of the DBS certificate and give authorisation for the update check to be made. If the check is not satisfactory, the University retains the right to request a new DBS check.

The University requires that all students apply for one DBS certificate for the duration of their course but, if after suspension of studies they are absent for a period of more than 12 months, the student will be required to apply for a new DBS check to provide clearance for the full duration of the course of study.

Any student required to provide a DBS check who has resided outside of the UK for a period of 3 months or more in the 10 years prior to the start of their course will be required to provide a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' from all countries in which they have resided for 3 months or more during that time. The DBS provides additional information on how to access these checks, Guidance on the application process for criminal records checks overseas - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The University will ask applicants for Employment-based Training courses to sign a form authorising their employer to provide their DBS certificate information and confirm or otherwise the presence of additional information.

The University will record these details in the same manner as DBS certificates processed by the University and the information will be retained for the same time period. Where their acceptance onto the course represents a significant change in responsibilities or job role with their employer, the University would expect to see that a new DBS certificate had been obtained.

For applicants on salaried School Direct Accredited courses, the University will request School Direct partners to provide to the University DBS information for their students. The University will record these details in the same manner as those DBS certificates processed by the University and the information retained for the same time period.

Where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they intend to defer entry until the following year, they will be sent information to apply for a DBS check during the 12 months prior to their date of entry. However, if an applicant defers late in the application cycle and has already applied for a DBS check, they could be liable to undergo another DBS check in the following year of the UCAS cycle and be liable to pay the due amount unless the original check was registered with the DBS Update Service.

A DBS certificate carries no formal period of validity, and older certificates will contain less reliable information as the information it contains may not reflect recent incidents. Therefore, the University is obliged to ensure that applicants undertake a DBS certificate in the admissions cycle immediately prior to the commencement of their course of study and not before unless the DBS certificate is registered with the Update Service.

Criminal Convictions

All applicants who are current serving prisoners should be supported by either a probation or prison officer's report regarding their conviction, which will include a risk assessment. Applicants will be sent a standard letter by the University asking for further details. Such applicants may be subject to providing details of their police records. It should be noted that having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from being accepted on their chosen course. This will depend on the nature and circumstances of the offence and if appropriate, the decision of the Criminal Conviction Group.

Applicants, who declare convictions or criminal records for relevant courses or where offences are present on DBS certificates, will be asked to provide details of the conviction(s) depending on the nature of the conviction(s). For all courses, all isolated offences which meet the following criteria will be risk-assessed by the University's Admissions Manager and the application authorised:

- Road Traffic Offences* (including speeding, driving without insurance, failing to report an accident, driving a motor vehicle with excess alcohol, failing to provide a specimen for analysis, driving without due care and attention and being in charge of a mechanically propelled vehicle whilst unfit through drink)
- Drunk and disorderly behaviour
- Being drunk at a sporting event
- Possession of a class C drug
- Shoplifting
- Travelling without a ticket/fare
- Trespassing

*Parking tickets and fixed penalty road traffic offences are ignored. Road traffic offences involving fatalities are not included in this.

Where the Admissions Manager is unable to satisfactorily recommend an outcome, the case will be discussed with the Programme Leader (PL) OR Programme Area Leader (PAL). If the Admissions Manager and the PL/PAL are unable to satisfactorily recommend an outcome, the case will be referred to the Professional Issues and Criminal Convictions Panel (PICCP).

Under the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, a number of people are automatically banned from working with children and these include those on the Children's Barred list and the Adult's Barred list. Other offences are specifically named.

The Department of Health and Social Care and DfE also indicate clearly that the sorts of offences or behaviour that would most likely lead to someone being barred from teaching include:

- Sexual offences
- Crimes of violence
- Crimes of dishonesty including fraud or embezzlement
- Offences relating to possession or supply of illegal drugs
- Any offences against children or which raised concern regarding hild protection

When considering a person's suitability to join or remain on a course the University will review:

- The length of time which has passed since the offence without any further convictions
- The seriousness of the offence and whether it may be relevant to a person's professional position
- Whether it would be proportionate to remove a person from the profession or prevent them joining the profession on the basis of the offence committed
- Whether any children were directly involved either as victims or in terms of being put at risk
- The explanation provided by the student or applicant

The amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be considered. All cautions and convictions for specified serious violent and sexual offences, and other specified offences of relevance for posts concerned with safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, will remain subject to disclosure. All convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not

suspended, will remain subject to disclosure, as will all convictions where an individual has more than one conviction recorded. More information can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide

The Professional Issues and Criminal Convictions Panel (PICCP) consists of the Head of Quality and Standards (Chair), the Admissions Manager, a senior representative of Student Wellbeing & Support, Safeguarding Leads per School, and a nominated representative of the course. The Apprenticeship Manager and Practice Learning and Compliance Manager may also attend where appropriate. They will consider all evidence, taking into consideration the date(s) of the conviction(s) and the seriousness of the offence(s) before making a recommendation to the Registrar.

The Registrar will decide whether to withdraw the offer of a place or to impose restrictions upon the offer. If the applicant wishes to appeal the decision, they must follow the appeal's process as set out in section 19 of this policy.

The University undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing an offer of a place on a course.

All information provided or revealed to the University will be treated as strictly confidential and disclosed only to authorised personnel involved in the risk assessment process.

In the case of a decision not to admit an applicant to a course, all correspondence will be destroyed 7 years after the date of the decision. In all cases, the Admissions Manager will keep a confidential file note for seven years. This will record the decision made about the admission and that it was made in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy and Procedures.

Additional Safeguarding Checks for Teacher Training

All teacher training applicants will have a Teacher Status check, accessed through the Department for Education (DfE) portal, to

- identify any prohibition, sanction or restriction that may/will affect their ability to carry out certain activities, or work in particular roles, for example, Secretary of State's teacher prohibition order
- see details of any Secretary of State decision not to impose a prohibition order following a professional conduct panel's determination of unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute or conviction of a relevant offence
- identify potential restrictions imposed by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All teacher training trainees who may be working with Early Years aged children, birth to Reception (5 years old) during and after school hours, and/or above Reception age but below 8 years old out of school hours (but not extended hours for co-curricular activities) i.e. breakfast clubs and other after school provision, will be required to complete an annual declaration as per Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (Sections 75 and 76). For more information, see https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006#staff-covered. This check is completed as part of the enrolment process.

Referrals to the DBS

Referrals should be made to DBS when an employer or organisation believes a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to vulnerable groups, including children. An employer or volunteer manager is breaking the law if they knowingly employ someone in a regulated activity with a group from which they are barred from working. A barred person is breaking the law if they seek, offer or engage in regulated activity with a group from which they are barred from working.

The University will abide by its legal requirement to make referrals to the DBS about students or staff where there is harm or risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, relevant conduct has occurred, or an individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

The University will refer to the DBS information which does or could indicate that an individual has engaged in an activity that caused concern for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults.

The Admissions Manager will make referrals in relation to any applicants or students by completing the on-line referral form and submitting to the DBS together with any supporting information and evidence which may be held, on behalf of the University. The People Team will make any such referrals in relation to staff.

The DBS can only consider referrals that are related to safeguarding children or vulnerable adults in the workplace (including volunteers) during a regulated activity.

10. Occupational Health Checks

For some programmes (e.g. health, social care, education), applicants must:

- Complete a pre-admission Occupational Health assessment, which is provided by a third party and is totally confidential and secure.
- Satisfactorily meet fitness-to-practise standards as defined by relevant professional bodies, which may include vaccination where appropriate to ensure alignment to any NHS requirement

Failure to meet requirements may result in offer withdrawal.

In all mentioned cases, upon receipt of a firm acceptance of the offer of a place, the University will send the applicant log-in details to complete a confidential on-line health questionnaire. This is confidentially and securely managed by an external contractor, who will forward a decision to the University as follows:

- Pending
- Fit
- Fit with Restrictions
- Unfit for the role

Where the status is Fit or Fit with restrictions, the applicant will be deemed as suitable for the role. Where the status is Unfit for the role, the Admissions Manager will withdraw the offer of a place or offer an alternative programme of study. This information is for facilitating an admissions decision only and is totally confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

If the applicant appeals against the decision and can provide further evidence to support their appeal, the Admissions Manager will request a re-assessment of the fitness of the applicant. The final decision on acceptance on the course is made by the University.

The University will not allow any trainee to commence a placement organised by the University until they have been assessed as Fit or Fit with Restrictions.

11. Applicants Under the Age of 18

Applicants who will be under 18 on entry must:

- Provide parental or guardian consent.
- Have appropriate accommodation and welfare arrangements in place.
- Agree to safeguarding conditions set out by the University.

Admission is conditional on compliance with these requirements.

Full requirements and expectations are set out in the University's Safeguarding Policy.

12. Scholarships and Financial Awards

Eligibility for financial awards is assessed according to published criteria.

Awards are discretionary and may be limited in number.

Applicants are notified of outcomes after an offer is made or as part of the offer letter, where applicable.

13. Fraud and Misrepresentation

The University may withdraw or refuse an offer if:

- Information provided is false, misleading, or incomplete.
- Documents are forged or tampered with.
- Academic work submitted is not the applicant's own.

Findings of any investigation may be shared with UCAS, UKVI, or relevant external bodies.

14. Qualification and Identity Verification

Applicants must provide evidence of their qualifications and confirm their identity as part of the admissions and enrolment process.

For qualifications, acceptable evidence includes:

- Original certificates or official transcripts
- Certified copies or direct verification from awarding bodies
- Official translations where documents are not in Englis
- Verified results through the UCAS system, where applicable

In some cases legal or regulatory requirements determine the format of evidence that must be provided and this will be specified in any offer made.

For identity verification, applicants must provide:

- A valid form of photographic identification (e.g. passport, national ID card)
- Additional documentation if required, to confirm legal name, date of birth, and/or right to study in the UK

All documents submitted must be accurate, genuine, and correspond to the information provided in the application.

Failure to provide satisfactory qualification and/or identity evidence by the specified deadline may result in the withdrawal of any offer made. The University reserves the right to request further evidence where necessary and to verify the authenticity of any documents submitted.

15. Deferral, Withdrawal and Course Changes

Applicants may:

- Request to defer entry by one academic year, subject to: course availability, PSRB requirements, UCAS policy, and having met the offer entry requirements.
- Withdraw their application at any stage before enrolment.
- Request a course change prior to enrolment, subject to availability and entry requirements.

16. Readmission after Previous Withdrawal or Failure

Applicants previously withdrawn or who failed may reapply where:

- They demonstrate academic or personal progression.
- A minimum of one academic year has passed since leaving.
- The application is supported by relevant academic teams.
- They have not exhausted the retrieval of failure process (i.e. reached the limit in number of attempts permitted at an assessment or module).

Decisions are made case-by-case and the Recognition of Prior Learning process followed.

17. Alternative Offer at Point of Confirmation

Applicants who do not meet the entry requirements or the conditions of their offer may still be admitted to a course at the University's discretion if the Admissions team believes the applicant has the potential to succeed and if there are places available. Applicants may be offered an alternative course to their original choice.

18. Recognised Prior Learning

Applicants may request entry to a later stage of a course based on previous study (certificated learning) or experience (experiential learning). Applications based on prior learning are considered under the University's Student Regulation Framework (Section 8.6.1).

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)

RPCL refers to learning that has already been formally assessed and certified, such as qualifications or credits from another institution.

If an applicant has completed parts of a course elsewhere, they may be able to join a programme at a later stage and avoid repeating content, up to certain limits set by the University.

Applicants must provide official evidence, such as a transcript, to prove the credits they've previously earned and the subjects studied.

This evidence must usually come from a recognised Higher Education Institution and meet national academic standards.

To be accepted, the previous learning must be:

- Authentic (genuine and verifiable)
- Relevant to the course
- Up to date (completed within the previous 5 years)

If there are small gaps in what the applicant has previously studied, equating to a maximum or 20 credits, the Programme Leader may ask them to complete some additional work to bring their knowledge up to the required level.

The total of certificated credit may not exceed the limits set, as defined in the University's Student Regulation Framework (Section 8.6.3).

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)

RPEL applies to learning gained through life or work experience, outside formal education.

When assessing experiential learning, the University will look for evidence that the applicant has the skills needed for higher education, including:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Independent and group working
- Self-reflection
- Building logical arguments
- Coping with feedback and change
- Time management
- Completing substantial tasks or projects

It is the *learning* gained from experience, not the experience itself, that is assessed. Academic staff will make this judgement.

Applicants must provide a portfolio of evidence, which could include:

- Written reflections
- Interviews with an assessor
- Examples of work (e.g. projects, essays, videos)
- Observations of skills in action (e.g. presentations or coaching)
- Testimonials or references
- Additional tasks set by the University

Admissions will keep records of any evidence submitted, in line with the University's data retention policies.

Currency of Learning

Prior learning must normally be completed within five years.

Exceptions may apply based on relevance or continuing professional development.

Relevance and Assessment

The relevance, volume, and level of prior learning are assessed by academic staff.

Entry is not guaranteed and depends on course capacity and academic fit.

Decisions

The evidence is reviewed by the academic lead for the course, who will complete the RPL Mapping Form (Appendix 3) to determine which learning outcomes have already met and recommend any exemptions. The final admissions decision is made by Admissions on the basis of the application and the recommendation of the academic lead.

Grading

Credit awarded through RPL is marked only as pass or fail.

These credits do not contribute to the final grade or classification of the degree unless the applicant completes the full module and its assessments at the University.

Charges

If an applicant’s prior learning is reviewed but they do not go on to join the course, the University may charge £50 per module reviewed.

19. Appeals and Complaints

Applicants may:

- **Appeal** an admissions decision if they believe it was made in error or without due process.
- **Complain** about the admissions process or conduct of staff.

Appeals and complaints must be submitted within **20 working days** of the decision.

Making an appeal or complaint will not disadvantage the applicant in any way.

Appeal against an admissions decision – stage 1 informal appeal

If an applicant is unhappy with any part of the application process, they should first contact the Admissions team to try to resolve the issue informally. If they are not satisfied with the informal response, they can formally write to the Admissions Manager within 20 working days. Applicants cannot appeal an admissions decision based on academic judgement.

The letter or email should be titled 'Admissions Decision Appeal' and clearly explain the reasons for dissatisfaction and what outcome the applicant is seeking. The appeal should include new information or evidence that was not available when the decision was made, or proof of a fault in the admissions process.

Appeal against an admissions decision – stage 2 formal appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the response received following stage one of the appeals process the formal appeal stage may be used. A formal appeal must be made in writing to the Admissions Office where it will be passed to the appropriate director of service and must be received within 10 working days of the informal appeal outcome being communicated. The written formal appeal should set out briefly: the nature of the appeal, the informal steps already taken, details of the response received and a statement as to the reason for the dissatisfaction with the outcome of the informal appeal, and the outcome that the application is seeking.

The relevant director of service will review all the evidence provided by the applicant and will investigate the selection procedure followed and decision made. The applicant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within 15 working days of the submission. Where an appeal is upheld, the applicant will be notified of the recommended remedial actions. Where an appeal is not found, the applicant will be given the reasons for this finding.

The outcome of the Formal Appeal will be final.

Complaints

The complaints procedure is set out in set out in Section 17 of the Student Regulations Framework

20. Monitoring and Review

Admissions data is reviewed annually to ensure fairness and compliance.

Policies and procedures are regularly updated in line with regulatory changes and institutional strategy.

APPENDIX 1

Relevant legislation

Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) defines a legal basis for the handling of personal information relating to living people.

The University complies with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice (November 2015), https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice

Freedom of Information Act 2000 creates a general right of access, on request, to information held by public bodies.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) enables some criminal convictions to be regarded as 'spent' after a rehabilitation period. Certain professions and employments are exempt from the Act so that individuals are not allowed to withhold details of previous convictions in relation to their job when applying for positions in similar fields.

Human Rights Act (2018) the Act makes it unlawful for a public body to act in a way which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

Equality Act (2010) the Act bans unfair treatment of people because of protected characteristics they have. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (legislation.gov.uk) allows for the vetting of people who work or seek to work with children or vulnerable adults, and for the barring those considered to be unsuitable for such work.

The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 (legislation.gov.uk) state the legislation concerning tuition fees and the entitlement to student finance in England.

Keeping children safe in education (2023) defines the legal obligations the university has when carrying out its safeguarding procedures in order to promote the welfare of children

APPENDIX 2

Relevant University Strategies, Policies, Procedures and Schemes

University documents are available on our website at
https://www.marjon.ac.uk/about-marjon/governance--management/university-strategies--policies/

Equality and Diversity Scheme
www.marjon.ac.uk/about-marjon/diversity/

Widening Participation
https://www.marjon.ac.uk/about-marjon/governance--management/university-strategies--policies/APP_2019-20_V1.pdf

Student Regulations Framework
https://www.marjon.ac.uk/about-marjon/institutional-documents/student-regulations-framework

Terms and Conditions
www.marjon.ac.uk/courses/terms-and-conditions/

APPENDIX 3

RPL Mapping Form

To be completed by the Programme Leader and forwarded with the evidence submitted to admissions@marjon.ac.uk. Please refer to the University's Admissions Policy and Procedures and Regulations for Academic Awards (Section 8.6)

Student Forename		
Student Surname		
Student Number		Applicant or Current Student
Programme Title		
Details of evidence provided:		

Previous certificated modules or experiential learning being used for RPL	Marjon Modules against which the RPL is being mapped with Learning Outcomes covered
Total RPL credits claimed and level	

Submitted by:	
Registry Approved:	
Date approved:	

Document Title	Admissions Policy and Procedures
Version	1.17
Issuing Authority	Senate
Custodian	Director of External Engagement
Last Amended	December 2025
Sensitivity	Unclassified
Circulation	Web publication
Effective from	June 2009
Review Date	Annual and as required in line with regulatory and strategic change.
Effective until	Ongoing
History	Version 1.1 published on website June 2009 Version 1.2 revised to take account of new APL policy, to MRSC 10 June 2010. Version 1.3 updated to take account of institutional restructuring, November 2010 Version 1.4 incorporating minor amendments by MRSC. Version 1.5 to ADC for comment June 2012 Version 1.6 annual update, approved by Academic Board 29 June 2012 Version 1.7 annual update incorporating appeals and complaints procedure 21 May 2013 Version 1.8 approved by APDC with further amendments on 9 July 2013 Version 1.9 Consolidation of most recent suggested amendments in preparation for review by AQSC. Approved at AQSC 12, 8th June 2016: responsibility transferred to ADC from the start of the 2016-17 academic session. Version 1.10 approved by ADC with minor amendments, 31st May 2017. Version 1.11 annual update including minor amendments and GDPR compliance, approved by Academic Board, 1st June 2018. Version 1.12 revised to include APL coverage, approved at Senate on 10th April 2019 (Senate 18-04). Version 1.13 annual update including minor amendments. Review date extended by Senate (Senate 21/02). Version 1.14 annual update, approved by Senate on 6th July 2022. Renewal approved by Senate on 10th May 2023. Version 1.15 annual update (including minor amendments). Approved by Senate 23/05, 3rd July 2024.

	Senate approved the period of review change from annual to 'as required in line with regulatory and strategic change.' Version 1.16 Policy revised to use plain English. Unclear terminology, vague language, and organisational inconsistencies removed or replaced to ensure clarity, consistency, and accessibility. Additions include: • Clear guidance on application routes (UCAS, direct, internal, international). • Defined communication methods and timing (email, portal, post). • Portfolio requirements, including criteria, submission process, and assessment. • A dedicated section for applicants requiring a visa, including ATAS, CAS, and financial documentation. • Detailed checks: fee status, criminal convictions, DBS, occupational health, and UKVI compliance. • Safeguarding guidance for applicants under 18, including consent and accommodation. • Scholarship eligibility criteria and communication process. • Fraud and misrepresentation explicitly noted as grounds for rejection or withdrawal of offers. • Qualification verification processes and evidence requirements. • Clear processes for deferral, withdrawal, and course changes. • Conditions for readmission after previous withdrawal or failure. • Interview procedures: outcomes formally recorded, no verbal offers, one interview per cycle. • "Advanced Entry" section added, replacing APL/RPL terminology, with defined criteria on prior learning, currency (typically within 5 years), relevance, and evidence requirements. • Contextual offer-making procedures added • All elements previously covered by the Student and Programme Compliance Policy that relate to

	admissions (all aspects therein apart from placements). Version 1.16 Approved at Senate 24/05, 2nd July 2025. Version 1.17 Approved at Senate 25/02, 10th December 2025. Inclusion of new formal appeal stage for admissions appeals. All references to Section 16 of the SRF (Academic Appeal Procedure) removed. Version 1.17 renewed (no change) at Senate 25/04, 24th June 2026.