

ULSTER UNIVERSITY
CPF/18/22COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FORUM
3 October 2018

CPF/18/22
Agenda Item 9

AUDIT OF ADMISSIONS

To consider a paper following the Audit of Admissions in 2017/18.

ACTION

For discussion.

Audit of Admissions 17/18

Faculty Partnership Managers, September 2018

Counselling and related courses will be the subject of a separate audit, which will be reported to the next Forum meeting

All first year enrolments with the exception of Counselling and related courses in 17/18 were reviewed against the University's General Entry Requirements for Foundation Degrees (appended) and the offer standard for each course. The focus was on level 3 qualifications, since GCSE English and maths evidence is now attached to enrolment forms, and was the subject of a separate review in 2018.

The reviewers identified some issues in all colleges, but in many cases this was due to insufficient information provided on the returns. Many courses had no issues; anomalies where found tended to recur in specific courses, perhaps indicating that individual course teams did not fully understand the regulations.

General issues which the reviewers encountered:

- EU qualifications not referred to Partnership Managers, and admission recorded as 'NARIC'. NARIC is not a basis for admission; it assesses comparability of qualifications, but is advisory only. In addition, EU qualifications do not automatically cover GCSE English and maths. The University has a list of acceptable offers for all EU and most International qualifications, specified for English, maths and CCC offers.
- International qualifications not referred to Partnership Managers and not specified on the return (e.g. 'Australian-based qualification').
- APEL admissions not approved by Partnership Managers. This was the subject of a separate review in 2018 and a protocol is now in place.
- One candidate was admitted on the basis of transfer from another Foundation degree in another institution to a non-cognate Foundation degree. It is the responsibility of the partner to check that the candidate meets *their* entry requirements.
- NVQ Level 3 Diplomas are not on the published list of acceptable alternative qualifications.
- One candidate was admitted on the basis of 2 AS-levels which now only account for 40% of an A level and require one further A level.
- Grades and size of award were not disclosed for BTEC admissions.
- Access equivalence for offers below CCD was not applied uniformly.
- Grades declared did not always add up to the tariff.
- Some candidates were admitted on the basis of 1 A level only, and it was unclear how the offer standard could be met.

The two largest issues encountered were the following:

- Large numbers of candidates across most colleges were admitted on the basis of a Pass or a Merit in one Subsidiary Diploma, sometimes plus COPE. It was unclear how such candidates met the offer standard since a Pass is worth 16 points, and a Merit is worth 32.
- Access equivalence for offers below CCD was not applied uniformly

The Forum is invited to discuss Access offers and Subsidiary Diploma offers in particular.

Foundation Degree General Entrance Requirements

1 Applicants for entry to a programme leading to a Foundation Degree must satisfy:

- (a)(i) the General Entry Requirements of the University as specified in 2 below; and
 - (a)(ii) such additional requirements as may be prescribed for admission to particular programmes of study;
- or as an alternative to (a)(i) and/or (a)(ii):
- (b) provide evidence of their ability to undertake the programme through the accreditation of prior experiential learning.

2 To satisfy the General Entry Requirements applicants must:

- (a) provide evidence of competence in written and spoken English (GCSE grade C or equivalent) and, where specified within individual programme entry requirements, in numeracy (GCSE grade C or equivalent); and
- (b) have attained passes in four different subjects, of which one should be at GCE Advanced (A) level (grades A-E) and three at GCSE level (grades A, B or C) or an equivalent standard in an approved alternative qualification.

The requirements of 2(a) hereof may be met within 2(b).

For the purpose of fulfilling the General Entry Requirements, two Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level subjects are regarded as 40% of one GCE A level provided that the applicant's profile also contains one GCE A level.

The University will accept as alternative qualifications:

- (i) One VCE/GCE Applied A level and either three passes at GCSE (grade C or above) or an Intermediate GNVQ or two Double Award Vocational GCSEs.
- (ii) BTEC National qualifications awarded by the Edexcel Foundation.
- (iii) OCR National qualifications.
- (iv) Four Highers and/or Advanced Highers of the Scottish Qualifications Authority
- (v) The European, International or Welsh Baccalaureate.
- (vi) An Irish Leaving Certificate with passes in four approved subjects at grade D Higher level.
- (vii) Satisfactory completion of an approved Access programme.
- (viii) For entry to Art and Design degree courses, satisfactory completion of a full-time foundation course in Art and Design of not less than one academic year in duration.

No subject may be counted at more than one level except in the case of the VCE/ GCE Applied A level combined with the Intermediate GNVQ.