

UCEM Code of Practice

Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning

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Introduction

This document represents UCEM's overarching policy on the admission of students and the recognition of prior learning for all Higher Education (HE) programmes of study.

In line with our core purpose to *'provide truly accessible and cost effective education, enabling students to enhance careers, increase professionalism and contribute to a better built environment'*, UCEM seeks to be effective in recognising the potential applicants have to succeed in their chosen programmes of study. The Admissions Policy operates to support students in this objective at each stage of the admissions process. UCEM is committed to delivering a high quality service to all applicants through admissions processes that are fair, transparent and applied consistently as outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B2 and Chapter B6.

The aims of the policy are to ensure that:

- Applicants are treated fairly and consistently
- Applicants are appropriately supported and guided through the application process
- Applicants are able to make appropriate, informed choices
- UCEM strategic objectives are recognised

1. Widening Participation

Providing accessible education is at the heart of our core purpose and UCEM is committed to widening participation to achieve this. UCEM provide a range of flexible learning pathways that seek to attract a board range of applicants and recognises the value of learning whether it occurs in Further or Higher Education or within the workplace.

2. Equality and Diversity

UCEM is committed to providing transparent, fair and consistent practice for all individuals. No potential student will be excluded entry to any UCEM programme as a result of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. A copy of our Code of Practice: Equality and Diversity Policy is made available on the UCEM website and the Applicant Portal.

3. Disability and specific learning needs

- 3.1 Applicants with disabilities or additional needs are welcomed by UCEM and are encouraged to disclose this information to UCEM or their Apprenticeship Lead Provider in their application. Applicants who choose to indicate they have a disability or additional needs will be contacted by UCEM's Disability and Wellbeing Advisor to discuss what reasonable adjustments can be made and/or if additional support is required.
- 3.2 Applicants who choose not to disclose their disability or additional needs at the application stage can do so at any point during their studies.
- 3.3 Applications from candidates with disabilities and/or additional needs will be judged on the basis of the core entry requirements. Admission decisions and discussion of support needs are taken independently. If UCEM is unable to meet additional needs, or can only do so by compromising the learning experience, we will inform the applicant as soon as is reasonably practicable.

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- 3.4 For more information please see our Code of Practice: Disability and Special Educational Needs <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/about-ucem/code-of-practice/>

4. Criminal convictions

- 4.1 In line with UCEM's core purpose to provide truly accessible education we support applications from those with current i.e. unspent convictions, applicants on parole or those serving a sentence; however, applicants will need to consider how they will access learning materials which are delivered to students online via our Virtual Learning Environment and, if on an Apprenticeship programme, via the face-to-face workshops. This should be considered in conjunction with the expected workload and contact hours for the programme, as outlined in the relevant Programme Specification.
- 4.2 Applications from candidates with current (including unspent) convictions or on parole will be carefully considered by the Admissions Officer and others, as appropriate. Such applicants must upon request provide details of the conviction.
- 4.3 UCEM reserves the right to refuse entry to any applicant with a criminal conviction which may jeopardise the security, safety or reputation of the University College or its staff or students.
- 4.4 UCEM will ensure that any potential student who has disclosed information in relation to a criminal conviction, or is currently serving a sentence, is aware of the advice and support which UCEM can offer in relation to the proposed programme of study.

5. Age on entry

- 5.1 UCEM welcomes applicants from people of all ages however in the case of students commencing a programme before their 18th birthday we have an enhanced duty of care as these students are regarded as children under UK law.
- 5.2 Applications from under 18s will be carefully considered by the Programme Leader who will consider what parental and employer support is available to the applicant for the duration of their studies.

6. Admissions information

UCEM is committed to providing clear and accessible information to enable applicants to make appropriately informed choices and decisions at relevant stages of the application process. With regards to admissions information UCEM will:

- Ensure that key information such as entry requirements, application closing dates, and programme/module fees are accurate and up-to-date.
- Ensure that enquires and applicants are able to access relevant policies via the UCEM website, the Applicant Portal, and on request.
- Ensure that if any significant changes are made to an advertised programme that the applicant is informed of the change and the options available to them as soon as possible as outlined in the Code of Practice: Public Information.

7. Admissions criteria

- 7.1 Entry requirements are established in accordance with the individual programme requirements and validating and accrediting bodies. Entry requirements for all programmes, including where appropriate, recognition of prior learning, are approved by UCEM's Academic Board.
- 7.2 The admission of any student will be determined by reference to the core entry requirements for the particular programme. Core entry requirements are shown on the relevant programme page on the UCEM website and in the Programme Specification document.
- 7.3 Mature applicants (over 21 years) who do not meet the core entry requirements but who are able to demonstrate relevant experience will be considered for non-standard entry. For more information please see section 12 (*Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admissions*) below.
- 7.4 Evidence of suitability for study including academic achievement, professional and personal experience, and the potential to succeed in the intended programme of study.
- 7.5 Where stipulated as part of the entry requirements, UCEM may use additional means such as interviews, personal statements or employer support, to judge the eligibility of an applicant for a programme.
- 7.6 UCEM welcomes students from all over the world and admits applicants with a wide range of international qualifications. UCEM will use independently published guidelines and rankings recognised within the United Kingdom higher education sector, such as UK NARIC when considering the equivalence of international qualifications.
- 7.7 Applicants for Apprenticeship programmes must meet the specific entry requirements for the Apprenticeship programmes. Currently Apprenticeships are not available to international students.
- 7.8 All teaching and assessment will take place in English. For this reason, all applicants must be competent in the English language and all programmes require at least GCSE English at Grade C, or an equivalent qualification. Applicants will need to submit evidence of meeting UCEM's minimum English language requirements before commencing their studies. Information English language requirements can be found on the UCEM website. UCEM's English language requirements can be found at: <https://www.ucem.ac.uk/study-with-ucem/international-students/language-requirements/>
- 7.9 There may be supplementary entry requirements in the case of programmes accredited by the sector Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies.

8. Responsibility of applicants

- 8.1 Applicants are expected to ensure they are familiar with the policies, procedures, and regulations associated with admissions.
- 8.2 It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide full and accurate information, with the appropriate supporting documentation, with an application for admission. Failure to provide this information will mean a decision on admission is either delayed or withheld altogether. UCEM will determine which information it needs to receive prior to making any decision on admission.

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- 8.3 Applicants are required to notify the Admissions Office of any changes or corrections to their application. In light of additional information not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or in some cases withdrawn.
- 8.4 UCEM reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if it is found at a later stage that the applicant has submitted a fraudulent application.

9. How to apply

- 9.1 Applications for Accelerated Route BSc programmes should be made via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS): www.ucas.ac.uk
- 9.2 Applications for part-time undergraduate programmes and all postgraduate programmes should be made directly via UCEM's online application form: <https://applications.cem.ac.uk/>
- 9.3 Applications for the Apprenticeship programmes must be made via the relevant application form, provided to applicants via their Lead Provider.

10. Application decisions

- 10.1 UCEM operates a centralised admissions service. Admissions decisions will be made on behalf of UCEM by designated staff within the Admissions Office. These decisions will be based on criteria agreed in consultation with academic staff and the Head of Admissions and Student Registration.
- 10.2 Applications for non-standard entry may be referred to the Programme Leader or the relevant Head of Faculty for a decision. For more information please see section 12 (*Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admissions*) below.
- 10.3 Applications for non-standard entry to Apprenticeship programmes may be referred to the Head of Apprenticeship Academic Team for a decision, provided they have been assessed and pre-approved by the Apprenticeship Management Team. For more information please see section 12 (*Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admissions*) below.
- 10.4 If any information provided within a completed application form is absent or unclear, the Admissions Team will seek clarification from the applicant before an application decision is made. This will delay the time between application and offer.
- 10.5 Applicants applying via UCAS will receive their application decision directly from UCAS. Applicants can monitor the progress of their application via the UCAS Apply and Track service. Successful applicants will also receive formal notification from UCEM via email.
- 10.6 Applicants applying to UCEM directly will receive their application decision from the Admissions Team via email. Any offer or a place will include information on how to respond to the offer and will detail any conditions that must be met and the timescales for meeting these.
- 10.7 UCEM endeavour to ensure that non-Apprenticeship applicants applying directly, who submit a completed application form with the required supporting documentation, receive their offer decision within 10 working days. The time between application and offer may extend 10

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working days if further information is required for a decision to be reached. Apprenticeship application decisions may also extend beyond 10 working days.

- 10.8 Applicants applying via UCAS will receive their decision no later than the relevant “reply by date”.
- 10.9 Where possible, unsuccessful applicants will be considered for suitable alternative programmes and will be informed of any alternative offers in their decision email.

11. Procedure for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

- 11.1 Applicants wishing to apply for credit transfer must indicate their intention in the exemption section of the application form.
- 11.2 Applicants with qualifications that have been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board will be offered credit transfer as per the exemption arrangements in place for the intake they are seeking admission to. Exemption arrangements are updated regularly and changes to the exemptions offered to students cannot be applied retrospectively. Applicants can request information on the exemption arrangements in place for their intake by emailing admissions@ucem.ac.uk
- 11.3 Applications for credit transfer based on qualifications that have not been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board will be assessed on a case by case basis by the Programme Leader. In these cases, the prospective student's application must be accompanied by evidence to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes for the modules against which exemption is being sought.

Normally, this evidence should consist of corroborative documentation such as transcripts and/or award certificates. However, UCEM may request submission of syllabus details for particular modules in order to clarify content and learning outcomes.

- 11.4 Once assessed by the Programme Leader, applications for credit transfer based on qualifications that have not been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board must be approved by the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Panel. The Panel meets weekly. Decisions regarding credit transfer based on qualifications that have not been approved for exemption by UCEM's Academic Board cannot be communicated to applicants until approved by the RPL Panel. Applicants will be notified that their application is being reviewed by the RPL Panel via email.
- 11.5 Decisions with regard to applications for exemption generally are delegated to the Admissions Team in consultation with the Programme Leader and/or Head of Faculty, working within the core entry requirements for the programme. In reaching a decision, reference will be made to specific academic criteria relating to the programme in question, any requirements stipulated by accrediting professional bodies and the documentary evidence provided by the candidate. Exemptions will only be granted when evidence of substantial achievement of modular outcomes is verified.
- 11.6 To maintain the relevance of learning, UCEM will normally only accept exemption for prior learning awarded within the last 7 years. If the prior learning has been completed more than 7 years previously, discretion may be exercised by the Programme Leader and the applicant may be asked to provide a statement outlining how they have maintained the currency of their learning.

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- 11.7 Applications for exemption can only be made for full modules and must be made by the application deadline for the programme. Retrospective exemptions will not be considered once the applicant has commenced their programme of study.
- 11.8 UCEM does not allow exemption where the module(s) concerned contribute(s) to undergraduate or postgraduate classification, except in the case of an existing UCEM student transferring from a discontinued programme to an alternative UCEM programme.
- 11.9 No grades or marks will be associated with the credit awarded through exemption.
- 11.10 No exemption is granted for postgraduate programmes, except in the case of an existing UCEM student transferring from a discontinued programme to an alternative UCEM programme and no exit award has been conferred. In these circumstances the credit transfer should not exceed 120 credits (equivalent of Postgraduate Certificate).
- 11.11 Normally at least one-third of any award must be accumulated as a result of learning assessed by UCEM, subject to any overriding Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements. Even in exceptional cases all credits upon which award classifications are based should be assessed by UCEM.
- 11.12 In certain cases, set out in the relevant programme specifications, credits from prior learning (up to a maximum of 240 notional credits on full undergraduate degree programmes) can contribute to a UCEM award, providing the credits have been gained from cognate subject areas.
- 11.13 Where a student transfers during their period of study from one UCEM programme to another, such transfer may include any relevant credit already gained.
- 11.14 Credits may not be used to count towards a second qualification which is both at the same level and in a similar subject to the first e.g. a student who has been awarded a BSc Quantity Surveying would not be able to count credits from this programme towards a second BSc in the field of Construction Management.

Credit Transfer of credits to count towards a second qualification at a higher level up to Level 6 may be allowed, subject to the limitations set out in section 11.12.

12. Procedure for the recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for non-standard admission

- 12.1 UCEM will assess prior experiential learning for applicants who do not meet the standard entry criteria for a particular programme. Students will be notified of the option to apply for RPEL in the entry requirements in the prospectus and on the relevant programme page of the UCEM website.
- 12.2 The prospective student's application will be evaluated with regard to their length and range of relevant experience and their motivation for undertaking the programme of studies to which entry is being sought. The candidate may be invited to provide separately, either a written statement summarising their experience, or a written submission relating to a particular aspect of the programme content, as determined by the Programme Leader, in order to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and motivation. In some cases applicants may be invited to attend an interview (whether face-to-face or online). "The

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essential feature of this process is that it is the learning gained through experience which is being assessed, not the experience itself.” (QAA 2013)

- 12.3 Decisions with regard to applications for RPEL are generally dealt with by the Programme Leader working within the core entry requirements for the programme and in consultation with the Admissions Team.
- 12.4 For Apprenticeship HE programmes, sections 12.1, 12.2, and 12.3 apply but the Programme Leader is replaced by the Head of Apprenticeship Academic Team, in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Management Team.
- 12.5 Similarly, in reaching a decision, reference will be made to specific academic criteria relating to the programme in question, any requirements stipulated by accrediting professional bodies and the documentary evidence provided by the candidate.

13. Procedure for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for the Award of Credit

- 13.1 UCEM does not currently evoke the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning for the award of credit from UCEM programmes or modules.

14. Late applications

Applications received after the closing date will be considered on a case by case basis. If it is deemed that the late application will have a detrimental effect on the ability of the applicant to complete the programme of study, the applicant will be offered the option to transfer to the next available intake.

15. Deferred applications

Successful applicants may request to defer their offer to the next intake. Applicants can only request to defer an offer once. If an applicant wishes to further postpone their entry to a programme beyond the next available intake they will be required to re-apply. If a student defers their place they will be subject to the Terms and Conditions of Contract that apply at the time they accept and register for their chosen programme, including relevant module fees.

16. Feedback

- 16.1 The reason for rejection will normally be communicated to the applicant via email however additional feedback can be provided on request. To request feedback please contact the Admissions Team at admissions@ucem.ac.uk
- 16.2 Applicants who are unsuccessful in their application for recognition of prior learning can also request additional feedback from the Admissions Team by emailing admissions@ucem.ac.uk
- 16.3 Requests for feedback should be made to the Admissions Team within 28 days of the application or exemption decision. UCEM makes a commitment to provide feedback to students within 21 days of their request.

- 16.4 UCEM applicants are invited to provide feedback on UCEM's application process and the service they have received via a short survey. This survey is emailed to applicants within one month of the programme start date.

17. Complaints and appeals

- 17.1 If an applicant is unhappy with any aspect of the service received they can make a complaint. A copy of the complaints procedure is made available on the UCEM website and the Applicant Portal.
- 17.2 An applicant may appeal their application or exemption decision if they have legitimate grounds to do so. In the first instance the appeal should be made to the Admissions Officer, at admissions@ucem.ac.uk.

If the applicant is still not satisfied they may appeal through the Appeals Procedure, a copy of which is available on the UCEM website and on the Applicant Portal. If an applicant wishes to raise an appeal they should do so within 28 days of receiving their application decision.

18. Data protection

- 18.1 All personal information held by UCEM will be treated in confidence, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). UCEM's [Data Protection Policy](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) set out the type of information UCEM collect and how it can be used.
- 18.2 In line with the Data Protection Act, enquirers and applicants are entitled to a copy of the data UCEM holds on them. If you wish to know what information we currently hold about you, please contact us by e-mail at records@ucem.ac.uk. Your enquiry will be dealt with as soon as possible and will not take more than 40 days to process.

19. Employee development

- 19.1 UCEM ensures that all employees involved in the admissions process are informed of their responsibilities and receive the necessary training and development to ensure they are effective in their roles.
- 19.2 All employees with the responsibility for setting admission criteria, decision making and/or assessing recognition of prior learning applications will receive regular updates on relevant internal and external policy, procedure and guidelines. Employees with support responsibilities will be informed of admissions policies and procedures.
- 19.3 UCEM seeks to ensure that all academic and administrative staff concerned with admissions, including those responsible for assessing recognition of prior learning, are informed of changes and updates to policies and procedures throughout Higher Education relating to admissions, by way of dissemination of information and training of staff as and when appropriate.
- 19.4 A copy of this document will be provided to UCEM External Examiners on taking up their appointment.

20. *Monitoring and review*

- 20.1 UCEM monitors and reviews its admissions activity annually to ensure that the Admissions Policy operates effectively.
- 20.2 UCEM's policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Admissions and Student Registration under referral to the Academic Board.
- 20.3 The core entry requirements relating to admission for each programme of study will be reviewed annually by the Programme Leader and any changes will be recommended for approval to the Programme Review and relevant Board of Studies.
- 20.4 The Admissions Team will provide annual data with regard to admission decisions for each programme of study.

21. *Terms and Conditions of Contract*

- 21.1 Applicants will be provided with a copy of UCEM's Terms and Conditions of Contract at the offer stage of the admissions process. This document sets out the general terms and conditions which apply to a student's contract and study with UCEM. A contract is formed when an applicant accepts an offer of a place by registering on to a programme of study for the first time.

22. *How to contact us*

Email:

admissions@ucem.ac.uk

enquiries@ucem.ac.uk

apprenticeships@ucem.ac.uk

Telephone:

UK Freephone: 0800 019 9697

International: +44 (0)118 921 4696

Appendix A Related policies

Related:

QAA (2013), UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality. Chapter B6: Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning

Benchmarked documents:

QAA (2013), UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality. Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education

QAA (2013), UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality. Chapter B6: Assessment of students and recognition of prior learning

Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Good Practice Statement (April 2014) Admissions Policies

Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Briefing (2014) Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning – definitions and examples.

UCEM Policies:

Core entry requirements for each programme of study (to be found in the UCEM prospectus and at www.ucem.ac.uk)

UCEM Academic and General Regulations for Students

UCEM Equality and Diversity Policy

UCEM Disability and Special Educational Needs Policy

UCEM Privacy Policy

UCEM Complaints Policy and Procedure

UCEM Appeals Policy

UCEM Programme Monitoring, Amendment, Review and Discontinuation

UCEM Safeguarding policy

UCEM Terms and Conditions of Contract

UCEM Terms and Conditions of Contract_Apprenticeship Programmes

Appendix B Glossary and definitions

Credit transfer

Credit transfer is where an institution recognises credit(s) 'awarded by a higher education degree-awarding body in accordance with the relevant higher education qualifications framework' (QAA 2013, p4) and allows that credit to count towards module exemption on a programme awarded by that institution.

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) relates to learning that has been achieved 'at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credits or qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications framework' (QAA 2013, p4), such as international qualifications and professional qualifications / memberships. The assessment and recognition of this learning by institutions can lead to the admission of a candidate if the outcomes of the prior learning are judged as equivalent to the entry requirements of the programme and/or the award of module exemption if the prior learning is judged as meeting the module(s) learning outcomes.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) is a mechanism for institutions to evaluate the previous learning undertaken (through experience and practice) by a potential student. This recognition may enable entry to a programme for a candidate if the outcomes of their prior learning are judged as equivalent to the entry requirements of the programme, and/or the award of module exemption if the prior experiential learning is judged as meeting the module(s) learning outcomes.