Contextualised Admissions

Policy

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Approval History

Version	Date	Name	Organisation
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Document History

Version	Date	Reason	Person
V00.01	25/01/2022	New Policy to present to QSEC	Alex Taylor
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V00.03	08/06/2022	Minor Amendments following Academic Board Actions	Alex Taylor

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1. Overview

UCEM is committed to widening participation in higher education and enabling students to achieve their full academic potential. We recognise that some students are more likely to face barriers to fulfilling their academic potential at school/college than others, through no fault of their own. Our contextual offer scheme exists to provide fairness and equality of opportunity, by ensuring that adequate steps are taken to address differences between applicants, including differences in their experience of educational opportunities. It compliments and supports our existing Access and Participation Plan.

The contextualised offer scheme uses additional information provided via the UCAS and UCEM application forms to recognise the potential of students whose personal circumstances may have restricted their achievement at school or college.

From the 22/23 academic year, **UK domiciled** applicants for entry to undergraduate higher education programmes who meet the specified criteria will be considered for a contextual offer. Eligible applicants will receive an adjusted offer, up to two A level grades (or equivalent) below the published typical offer level for the programme(s) applied for.

UCEM is also committed to supporting all students including those who enter through the contextualised offer scheme through a Student Success Initiative that is led by Module Tutors, the Student Engagement Team, and online Facilitators. This initiative identifies students at potential risk of failure or non-continuation and provides more directed support. Additionally, UCEM encourages an emphasis upon personal development through reflective practice which enables students to be able to identify areas of development and either self-serve or seek the support require.

2. How is contextual data used?

Each case is considered on an individual basis and the information used is drawn from the applicant's UCAS or UCEM application form.

The following contextual information will be taken into consideration and an applicant will be flagged if:

a. The applicant's home postcode is in a Low Participation Neighbourhood (defined as POLAR4 quintiles 1 or 2).

b. The applicant's home postcode is an area which has high levels of deprivation (defined as Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles 1 and 2).

c. The applicant has spent any time in Care under a local authority. This will require supporting evidence. This may include a letter from Social Services confirming that the applicant is or has been in care, evidence that the applicant has been in receipt of Income Support and Housing Benefit during their post-16 education or a letter confirming the applicant is or has been a Foyer resident.

d. Disability or long-term health condition.

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Applicants can use the POLAR4 and IMD postcode lookup tools to see if their postcode makes them eligible. This contextual data is used as part of the overall consideration of an applicant and not in isolation. A combination of items of contextual data are used in order to arrive at a holistic assessment of the applicant's potential for the programme for which they have applied. Contextual data informs but does not overrule the process of professional judgement which ultimately decides whether an offer is made.

3. The Contextual Admissions process

Applicants will apply as normal through UCAS or directly to UCEM. There is no need for additional information for contextual admissions. All information is collected through the existing application forms.

Applications will be assessed in the usual way against the programme entry requirements.

UK based applicants who meet the contextual data criteria will be flagged to the Admissions team and will be given additional consideration including, but not limited to, consultation with the relevant Programme Leader regarding any additional assistance or support that may be required should the applicant join a programme at UCEM. They may be made an offer which is lower than the typical offer for that programme.

The University College reserves the right to apply this process to applications using data available at that time. Where there is no data available in order to make a fair judgement, we will not apply the contextual admissions policy to the application.

For any other questions about contextual admissions, please contact: admissions@ucem.ac.uk.

4. Complaints and appeals

4.1   If an applicant is unhappy with any aspect of the service received, they can make a complaint. For more information, please see the UCEM Student Complaints Procedure (opens new window).

4.2   An applicant may appeal their decision if they have valid grounds to do so. These grounds are outlined in the Appeals Procedure (opens new window). In the first instance the appeal should be made to the Admissions Officer, at admissions@ucem.ac.uk, within 10 working days of receiving their application decision.

Signed by:

Wendy Finlay
Interim Chair of the Academic Board

Date: 8th July 2022