



Academic Quality Framework

**Section 8: Student Recruitment &
Admissions**

2023-2024

Academic Quality Framework

Section 8: Student Recruitment & Admissions

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to academic management staff, applicants to the UCO, Course Teams and Collaborative Partner staff.

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| V1.0 | March 2014 Academic Council | To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO. | Admissions Tutor | Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet | Annually and on an “as required” basis. |
| V2.0 | Sept 2016 Academic Council | Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice. | Admissions Tutor | Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet | August 2017 and on an “as required” basis. |
| V3.0 | Sept 2017 Academic Council | Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy | Admissions Tutor | Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet | Annually and on an “as required” basis. |
| V4.0 | Sept 2018 PRAG Chair | Administrative amendments to updated staff role titles and weblinks. | Admissions Tutor | Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website | Annually and on an “as required” basis. |
| V5.0 | Sept 2019 PRAG Chair | Administrative amendments to update staff role titles, weblinks & footnotes and to reflect current practice. | Registrar | Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website | Annually and on an “as required” basis. |
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| V8.0 | June 2022 PRAG Chair TQSC | Administrative Amendment to update academic year dates. | Registrar | Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website | Annually and on an “as required” basis. |
| V9.0 | June 2023 TQSC | Minor amendments to better reflect and incorporate the roles and responsibilities of Collaborative Partners. | Head of Marketing & Communications | Master Version: SharePoint – Quality Team Published Version: Website | Annually and on an “as required” basis. |
| Equality Impact | | | | | |
| Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities) | | | | | |
| Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect) | | | | | X |
| Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities) | | | | | |
| If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk | | | | | |

Academic Quality Framework
Section 8: Student Recruitment & Admissions
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8.1 RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS - AN OVERVIEW

- 8.1.1 The UCO and our Collaborative Partners' (i.e., institutions delivering courses that lead to a UCO award in partnership with the UCO) aim is to provide fair and equal access to Higher Education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it, and welcome applications from motivated students with appropriate qualifications, traditional and non-traditional, academic, and vocational. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and have a whole range of qualifications both from the UK and overseas.
- 8.1.2 The UCO and our Collaborative Partners consider applicants to courses that lead to a UCO award solely based on their merit, ability and potential. Applications from mature students who have no formal qualifications may be considered provided they have relevant work experience and we consider all information contained within the application form and produced during the interview process. This might include past academic performance, predicted grades, personal statements, academic and personal references, and any other evidence of skills, aptitude and potential to succeed.

8.2 RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS POLICY & PROCEDURES

- 8.2.1 For students studying at the UCO, the UCO's Admissions Policy and Procedures¹ is aligned with Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education regarding Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access², and provides further information on the recruitment and admissions processes in operation at the UCO, including the monitoring and evaluation of these processes and the Admissions Complaints and Appeals procedure. Responsibility for the UCO's Admissions Policy and Procedures lies with the Head of Marketing & Communications and Course Teams have admission sub-groups (Course Recruitment Groups) who are allocated the responsibility of reviewing all applicants to that course in line with the approved course entry criteria.
- 8.2.2 Collaborative Partners are normally delegated authority for recruitment and admission processes and may therefore operate to a variance of the UCO's Admissions Policy and Procedures which is approved at Partner Approval. The UCO retains oversight of Collaborative Partner recruitment and admission processes through evaluation, reporting and monitoring and periodic review activities (see AQF Section 5: Evaluation, Reporting & Monitoring, AQF Section 6: Periodic Review, and AQF Section 16: Collaborative Activity).

8.3 ADMISSIONS PROFILES

- 8.3.1 The UCO and Collaborative Partners make available admissions profiles for all academic courses leading to a UCO award.
- 8.3.2 All admissions decisions will be made against the criteria detailed in the admissions profile.
- 8.3.3 Each profile specifies:
- a) Typical academic entry requirements.
 - b) Other accepted experience and/or qualities.
 - c) Additional entry requirements specific to international students.
 - d) Additional entry requirements specific to the type and nature of the course.
- 8.3.4 Admissions profiles are normally made available via the Course Information Form (CIF) (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) on the UCO and / or the relevant Collaborative Partner's

¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

website as appropriate, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website³ (for undergraduate full-time courses), and in relevant course prospectuses.

- 8.3.5 Irrespective of the location of study, all applicants to courses that lead to a UCO award must demonstrate they have the skills necessary for successful study, evidence of motivation, and the commitment to succeed.

8.4 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

- 8.4.1 In addition to traditional academic qualifications the UCO and Collaborative Partners recognise prior learning of applicants, either as a basis for entry to a course or to exempt applicants from some course requirements.

- 8.4.2 Recognition of prior learning is normally considered through:

- a) Transfer of Credit (Advanced Standing), the process whereby the applicants are awarded credit for educational experiences or courses undertaken at another institution. The authority to consider requests for transfer of credit is delegated by the UCO's Academic Council to Course Leaders with authority to admit applicants to the relevant course.
- b) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), the process whereby the skills, competence and knowledge of applicants acquired prior to applying for study with the UCO or a Collaborative Partner is evaluated and recognised against specific learning objectives. Certificated and experiential recognition of prior learning may be considered as set out in AQF Section 7: Academic Regulations)..

- 8.4.3 Arrangements for the recognition of prior learning are set out in the UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy. Collaborative Partners may operate to an approved variance of this policy which is approved at Collaborative Partner Approval.

- 8.4.4 The availability of recognition of prior learning for a course is confirmed at course approval and is set out in Course Information Forms (CIFs) (or Collaborative Partner equivalents).

8.5 THE APPLICATION PROCESS

a) UNDERGRADUATE FULL-TIME COURSES

- 8.5.1 All full-time undergraduate applications are normally submitted through UCAS, which forwards applications to the UCO's and relevant Collaborative Partners' Admissions Departments as appropriate.

b) UNDERGRADUATE PART-TIME COURSES

- 8.5.2 Applications to undergraduate part-time courses are normally made directly to the UCO or the relevant Collaborative Partner via an online application form.

c) POSTGRADUATE COURSES

- 8.5.3 Applications to postgraduate courses are submitted directly to the UCO or the relevant Collaborative Partner using an online application form.

³ <https://www.ucas.com/>

8.6 SELECTION CRITERIA

- 8.6.1 Irrespective of the location of study (i.e., whether at the UCO or a Collaborative Partner) all applicants are selected according to the appropriate Admissions Profile for their chosen course.
- 8.6.2 Those applicants not meeting the selection criteria of their chosen course may be considered for, and offered, an alternative course.
- 8.6.3 If an application is unsuccessful the reason for rejection is recorded to provide applicants with feedback if requested.
- 8.6.4 Although minimum entry requirements for undergraduate courses are set in the CIF (or Collaborative Partner equivalent), conditional offers may be made in the context of the qualification being studied and offered for assessment for entry.

8.7 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS

- 8.7.1 Applications from prospective international students will be considered and processed consistently with “Home” applications.
- 8.7.2 Applicants presenting overseas qualifications will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the quoted minimum entrance requirements.
- 8.7.3 Assessment will be made using UCAS Qualification Information Profiles⁴.
- 8.7.4 All overseas applicants are required to provide the UCO or relevant Collaborative Partner with a verified copy of their qualifications and / or academic transcript in English.
- 8.7.5 Applicants with English as a second language must be proficient in English in order to be admitted to a course and have the required English language qualification as stated in the relevant admissions profiles.

8.8 INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS TO STUDY AT THE UCO - DEPOSITS AND VISAS

- 8.8.1 Applicants requiring entry clearance to enter/remain in the UK to study at the UCO will be required to pay a £1000 non-refundable deposit as a condition of the release of their Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS)⁵ at the UCO. This deposit provides the UCO with a measure of confidence of the seriousness of the applicant’s intention to study and is in line with the recommendations of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)⁶.
- 8.8.2 The £1000 deposit is only required to be paid for the first year of study and will subsequently be used as payment against the balance of tuition fees, which are paid at enrolment. Students will have the option of paying the remainder of their course fee by instalments.
- 8.8.3 International students requiring a Student Visa or other visa requirements must have these in place prior to course enrolment and thereafter comply with the conditions of the visa. For further guidance, applicants should contact the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)⁷ or visit the UK Government’s website⁸.

⁴ <https://qips.ucas.com/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/course>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

⁷ <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Visas-and-Immigration/Student-immigration-the-basics>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas>

- 8.8.4 Applications from overseas students are normally processed as per the normal admissions procedures. However, wording contained within conditional and unconditional offer letters will signal to applicants the necessity of making payment of the compulsory deposit once the applicant has reached “unconditional firm” stage.

8.9 INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS TO STUDY AT A COLLABORATIVE PARTNER – DEPOSITS AND VISAS

- 8.9.1 Whether a Collaborative Partner accepts International Students or not onto a course of study leading to a UCO award will be clearly stated at the point of application.
- 8.9.2 Where International Students are accepted onto a course delivered by a Collaborative Partner, the Partner is responsible for setting deposit fees and for ensuring that applicants are provided with correct and accurate guidance about visas as appropriate.

8.10 APPLICATION FORM SIMILARITY DETECTION SERVICE

- 8.10.1 The UCAS similarity detection service⁹ reviews all personal statements within incoming applications. These are checked against a library of all personal statements previously submitted to UCAS and sample statements collected from a variety of web sites and other sources, including paper publications. Each personal statement received by UCAS is added to the library of statements after it has been processed.
- 8.10.2 Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service team. Universities will be notified on a daily basis of any cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion. Applicants will also be notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection service has found that their personal statement merits investigation.
- 8.10.3 Following any notification from UCAS of Similarity Detection, it is the responsibility of the Admissions Officer (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) to contact the applicant to request an explanation regarding the reasons for the similarity in their personal statement to one submitted in a previous application.
- 8.10.4 The applicant's response will then be discussed along with their application at the subsequent Course Recruitment Group (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) meeting.

8.11 INTERVIEW EVENTS

- 8.11.1 Irrespective of the location of study all short-listed applicants for courses that lead to a UCO award are normally invited to attend an Interview Event to confirm whether they have the potential aptitude, motivation, and personal qualities to succeed on their desired course.
- 8.11.2 Interview Events are normally undertaken by Interview Teams comprised of at least one relevant Course Team staff and a member of the Admissions Team, and may either be in-person or online depending on the type and nature of the course, and whether the applicant is required to undertake practical tasks as part of the interview process.
- 8.11.3 Applicants are informed in advance of Interview Event details, thus allowing them an opportunity to discuss any special requirements or needs prior to attending.

⁹ <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity>

- 8.11.4 Interview Events are designed to appeal to the needs of applicants, providing all applicants with an equal opportunity to demonstrate to Interview Teams that they have the potential to become successful students.
- 8.11.5 The interview process for all courses leading to a UCO award is normally reviewed annually by the UCO and respective Collaborative Partners and is developed each year as appropriate based on feedback from students, staff and faculty, and in response to any relevant sector, institutional, or course changes.

8.12 DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS) AND HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRES

- 8.12.1 Courses requiring Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)¹⁰ checks and the completion of a Health Questionnaire will have this clearly stated in their CIF and / or the course prospectus (or Collaborative Partner equivalents).
- 8.12.2 Successful applicants to Pre-Registration or other courses where this is required will normally be required to undergo a police record check (carried out by the DBS) and will be required to complete a Health Questionnaire as a condition of enrolment.

8.13 APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS, CAUTIONS AND ARRESTS

- 8.13.1 Applicants to courses requiring a DBS check will be asked at the application stage to declare whether they have spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands, or warnings. Their attention will be drawn to the UCO's Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Policy & Procedure¹¹ (or approved Collaborative Partner equivalent).
- 8.13.2 A criminal conviction not yet spent shall not normally be a bar to entry to a course unless:
- a) The course provides entry to employment in an occupation covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order 1975.
 - b) In the view of the UCO or relevant Collaborative Partner, the applicant might pose a threat to staff and/or other students.
 - c) Specified by an accrediting Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body.
- 8.13.3 Whilst not wishing to penalise an ex-offender, the UCO and Collaborative Partners have a duty of care to their students, patients and staff and there may be occasions when an academically suitable applicant will be refused entry based on a past offense. Applicants who declare a criminal conviction are initially reviewed on the same academic grounds that apply to all applicants.
- 8.13.4 It is the responsibility of applicants to inform the UCO or the relevant Collaborative Partner of any convictions occurring after the application has been submitted and throughout their time at the UCO or the relevant Collaborative Partner.
- 8.13.5 As a condition of acceptance/continuation, all registering students on courses specifying it are required to have completed and cleared an enhanced DBS check by a given deadline.
- 8.13.6 Where an applicant indicates a criminal conviction on the application form, following a successful Interview Event, in addition to an offer letter detailing all conditions of enrolment, the applicant will be provided with information regarding the relevant DBS Policy and risk assessment procedure, and will be required to complete an early enhanced DBS check. The

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

¹¹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

Registrar (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) will then notify the applicant of the outcome of the risk assessment procedure.

8.14 FEES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- 8.14.1 Course fees are approved annually by the UCO's Senior Management Team (or Collaborative Partner equivalent), and the fees for an individual student are determined with reference to these course fees, the student's course of study, mode of attendance, and their fee status.
- 8.14.2 Fee and financial support information for courses that lead to a UCO award is published on the website of the institution responsible for delivery. For example, fees for courses delivered by the UCO are published here: <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/course-fees>.
- 8.14.3 Most full-time and part-time undergraduate UK students, who have not been awarded a previous degree, will be eligible for a Tuition Fee Loan from Student Finance England (SFE)¹² which will cover their fees. The loan, which is not dependent on household income, is paid directly to the UCO (or the relevant Collaborative Partner) by the Student Loans Company on the student's behalf. Many students will also be eligible to apply for living cost support.
- 8.14.4 The UCO and Collaborative Partners offer financial advice and support to its students, covering issues such as tuition fees, student loans, availability of grants and bursaries, and difficulties paying living expenses.
- 8.14.5 Financial assistance is available to students studying at the UCO and details about loan, bursary and funding schemes are published on our website¹³. Collaborative Partners may also provide students with other financial assistance packages.
- 8.14.6 Students studying at the UCO are encouraged to contact StudentSupport@uco.ac.uk if they have any queries about financial matters, before or during their studies. Students studying at Collaborative Partners are likewise encouraged to contact their equivalent student support staff for financial advice.

8.15 DISABILITY AND DYSLEXIA SUPPORT FOR APPLICANTS

- 8.15.1 Applications to all courses leading to a UCO award are assessed purely on academic grounds.
- 8.15.2 Where an applicant has declared a disability, they are invited to meet a UCO or Collaborative Partner (as appropriate) student support staff member to identify and agree any relevant support requirements they may require for the application process.
- 8.15.3 Where an applicant has complex needs, the Course Leader will also be invited to a preliminary discussion about course requirements. This may involve the UCO's Occupational Health Committee (OHC) (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) and the use of an occupational health professional to provide guidance on what reasonable adjustments can be made.
- 8.15.4 The OHC (or Collaborative Partner equivalent), guided by the Equality Act 2010, will inform the applicant of the reasonable adjustments that can be made in relation to their disability. Based on this information, it will be the applicant's decision to accept the offer of a place on a course. In the unlikely event that the UCO or Collaborative Partner is unable to make a reasonable adjustment, the Chair of the OHC (or Collaborative Partner equivalent), will inform the applicant as soon as possible.
- 8.15.5 All successful applicants to Pre-Registration or other relevant courses are normally required to complete a Health Questionnaire as a condition of enrolment.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-register-login>

¹³ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/life-uco/student-support>

8.15.6 The UCO and Collaborative Partners will be proactive in encouraging disclosure, and will, when an offer is made, include the following sentence on its correspondence: 'If you have a disability, please contact the Student Support Officer (or Collaborative Partner equivalent) to discuss your needs'.

AQF08: APPENDICES

| Appendix Reference Number | Appendix Title |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| N/A | N/A |