



## **Admissions Policy & Procedure**

## Admissions Policy & Procedure

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Our aim is to provide fair and equal access to Higher Education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy is written to inform applicants, parents, carers and advisors, and University College of Osteopathy (UCO) staff of the policies and procedures involved in making an application to the UCO. This policy applies to those applying to study for an Access, Pre-Entry, Undergraduate or Postgraduate course delivered by the UCO.
- 2.2 This policy also applies to those applying to study for a course that leads to a UCO award delivered by the following Associate Partners of the UCO:
- a) The Osteopathic Centre for Animals (OCA).
  - b) The Sports Medicine Ultrasound Group (SMUG).
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to those applying to study for a course that leads to a UCO award delivered by an Associate Partner of the UCO that implements its own Admissions Policy as approved by the UCO.

## 3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The UCO welcomes 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. We consider applicants to our courses solely on the basis of their merit, ability and potential. Applications from mature students who have no formal qualifications may be considered provided they have relevant work experience.
- 3.2 We will 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.
- 3.3 Our admissions policy is aligned with the UCO's Institutional Mission, Vision and Values (see Section 4), and aligns to the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education (2018) Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access advice and guidance<sup>1</sup>. It also aligns to all relevant equalities legislation including the UCO's Dignity at UCO Policy, and is guided by the Admissions Policies good practice resources published by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions made available by UCAS<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/providers/good-practice/admissions-policies>

## 4. INSTITUTIONAL MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

### A) MISSION

4.1 The UCO's mission is to:

*“Continually provide the highest quality education and research for all and the very best care, for each patient, on every occasion”.*<sup>3</sup>

### B) VISION

4.2 The UCO's vision is that:

*“By 2027, the University College of Osteopathy will be an internationally recognised university for both education and research in osteopathy and associated health care subjects; a vibrant community of staff and students keen to explore and exploit new ideas and challenge existing views, whose work will positively influence the quality of health care and shape future clinical practice locally, nationally and internationally.”*<sup>4</sup>

### C) VALUES

4.3 The values and conduct to which we aspire, and that we wish to foster and sustain are as follows:

- Students and patients will always come first
- A culture of critical enquiry, scholarship and research
- A respect for the heritage and values of osteopathy
- A respect for creativity and innovation
- A respect for equal opportunities
- A celebration of diversity
- A culture of openness and honesty
- A culture of collaboration and teamwork
- A desire for environmental sustainability

4.4 Excelling in our historic and continuing commitment to widening participation and to valuing diversity both within and beyond the UCO, the procedures through which the UCO assesses applications are designed to be fair, transparent, easily understood by candidates and based on principles that are applied consistently across the UCO.

4.5 Admission to the UCO is competitive and decisions will rest primarily on the qualifications, needs and aspirations of the applicant, and the reasonable expectation that they will be able to fulfil the objectives of their chosen course.

4.6 Applications from students with additional needs will be considered using the same criteria as all others. Applicants with additional needs are invited to contact our Student Support Staff to discuss the level of support and reasonable adjustments available for the admissions process and an applicant's chosen course.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/mission-values-and-strategy>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/mission-values-and-strategy>

- 4.7 The UCO will facilitate timely responses to enquiries and applications, ensuring that all necessary documentation is sent at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.8 The UCO aims to provide information materials and activities that are relevant, accurate, current and accessible in order that the applicant may make an informed decision about their options, including any changes that may be made to their chosen course during their application process.
- 4.9 Admission decisions will be made within this broad policy statement, in accordance with the UCO's Dignity at UCO Policy<sup>5</sup> and with regard to each course's specific entry and selection criteria.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The UCO's Course Recruitment Groups (CRGs) are responsible for the UCO's admissions policy and procedures. CRGs are also responsible for reviewing all applicants to courses and making admission decisions based on the course entry criteria, interviews, and any other course entry assessments as appropriate.
- 5.2 CRGs report to the UCO's Access & Student Success Committee (ASSC) which oversees the development, implementation, and review of the UCO's strategy, policies, and procedures to support the access, success and progression of students from groups under-represented in higher education.
- 5.3 The ASSC reports directly to the UCO's Academic Council, the UCO's academic decision-making committee, which is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

## 6. ADMISSIONS PROFILES

- 6.1 The UCO will make available admissions profiles for all its academic courses against which admissions decisions will be made.
- 6.2 Each admissions profile will specify:
  - a) Typical academic entry requirements.
  - b) Other accepted experience and/or qualities.
  - c) Additional entry requirements as applicable to the course of study, for example an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check for a professional healthcare course.
- 6.3 Admissions profiles are published on the UCO's website and specified on Course Information Forms (CIFs) which are also published on the UCO's website. Admissions profiles of undergraduate courses are also published on the UCAS website. .
- 6.4 Applicants must demonstrate they have the skills necessary for successful study, evidence of motivation and the commitment to succeed. In addition to traditional academic qualifications the UCO recognises prior learning of applicants, either as a basis for entry to a course or to exempt applicants from one or more units of a course, and include:

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- a) Transfer of credit.
- b) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

6.5 The authority to consider requests for transfer of credit and RPL are delegated by the Academic Council to RPL Committees with authority to admit applicants to the relevant course in line with our Recognition of Prior Learning Policy<sup>6</sup> and the amount of RPL that can be recognised as described in our Academic Regulations<sup>7</sup>.

## 7. APPLYING FOR COURSES

### 7.1 PRE-ENTRY / ACCESS COURSES

7.1.1 All pre-entry or Access course applications will be made directly to the UCO via the UCO's electronic application form.

### 7.2 UNDERGRADUATE FULL TIME COURSES

7.2.1 All full-time undergraduate applications will be submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) who forward applications to the UCOs Admissions Department.

### 7.3 UNDERGRADUATE PART TIME COURSES

7.3.1 Applications to undergraduate part-time courses will be made directly to the UCO via the UCO's electronic application form.

### 7.4 POSTGRADUATE COURSES

7.4.1 Applications to postgraduate courses are submitted directly to the UCO using the UCO's electronic application form.

### 7.5 HOW TO APPLY

7.5.1 Information about how to apply to a UCO course is provided in detail on the UCO's website<sup>8</sup> where applicants are also made aware of any application fees that may apply and can access application forms.

## 8. UCAS SIMILARITY DETECTION SERVICE

8.1 For applicants applying to UCO courses through UCAS, the UCAS similarity detection service 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 at UCAS is added to the library of statements after it has been processed.

8.2 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

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/how-apply/recognition-prior-learning-rpl>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/academic-quality-framework> (Section 7)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/how-apply>

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. Full details can be found at: <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity>

- 8.3 Following any notification from UCAS of Similarity Detection, it is the responsibility of the Admissions Offer to contact the applicant to request an explanation into the reasons of the similitude in their personal statement to one submitted in a previous application.
- 8.4 The applicant's response will then be discussed along with their application at the following CRG meeting and onward referral to the Academic Discipline Policy for further investigation.

## 9. SHORTLISTING APPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Admissions Team receive all application forms and shortlist those who meet the admissions profile for their chosen course in liaison with the relevant Course Leader.
- 9.2 The Admissions Team will contact shortlisted applicants and arrange for them to attend an interview event for their chosen course of study, as appropriate.
- 9.3 The Admissions Team will also contact applicants who have not met the admissions profile of their chosen course and may offer them the opportunity to study an alternative course or one of the UCO's pre-entry courses as appropriate and in line with the applicant's qualifications profile. If this offer is accepted, the applicant will be shortlisted for the alternative course and will be invited to an interview event.

## 10. INTERVIEW EVENTS

- 10.1 All shortlisted applicants will normally be invited to attend Interview Events at the UCO or online as appropriate. Applicants are informed in advance of the nature of the interview event, and are encouraged to discuss any special requirements or needs prior to attending.
- 10.2 The purpose of interview events is to confirm whether applicants have the potential aptitude, motivation and personal qualities to succeed on their chosen course. Interview Events are designed to appeal to the needs of applicants, providing them with an equal opportunity to demonstrate to Interview Teams that they have the required qualities and potential to become successful students.
- 10.3 For applicants unable to attend an Interview Event in person (for example if they are abroad or the timing is not convenient) a video or telephone interview may be offered. In each case the style of interview and interview questions will be the same for those who attend an Interview Event in person. Where a practical assessment is required as part of the interview process, an alternative date will normally be arranged for the applicant to visit to complete the assessment, or this will be undertaken via video, to ensure that all applicants are provided with the same opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for the course.

- 10.4 For all interviews the interview panel is normally comprised of at least two interviewers, which is the minimum number required to conduct the interview. The interviewers will use the same questions for each applicant applying for the same course, and all applicants will have the opportunity to discuss the information provided on their application form with the interviewers.
- 10.5 The interviewers complete a form during the interview to keep a record of the applicant's answers to their questions and to make notes that will be used by Course Recruitment Groups to inform the decision-making process about whether to offer an applicant a place on the course.
- 10.6 The interview process for all courses is reviewed annually and enhanced, if necessary, based on feedback from applicants, students, staff and faculty and on any relevant Higher Education and Institutional or Course changes. The interview event process is reviewed annually by the Admissions Team and Course Recruitment Groups and, if necessary, be enhanced or modified in response to feedback from applicants, staff and changes to admissions profiles.

## 11. DECISION MAKING

- 11.1 The decision to make an applicant an offer of a place onto a course is the responsibility of Course Recruitment Groups (CRGs). CRGs are normally comprised of the relevant Course Leader, Admissions Officer, a member of the Student Support Team and at least one other Course Team member. Those involved in this group consider application forms and interview event outcomes as part of the offer making process and will identify whether any further evidence or conditions are required.
- 11.2 Any deviation from the normal course admissions profile triggers a collective approach where the application and interview will be looked at in more detail as supporting information. This is performed on a case-by-case basis and is not solely based on academic qualifications. Interview outcomes and the applicant's prior experiences will be incorporated into the overall decision.

## 12. APPLICATION OUTCOMES (OFFERS)

- 12.1 Further to the decision-making process applicants will normally be provided with one of three application outcomes or "offers":
- i) An Unconditional Offer – where an applicant has clearly met the course admissions profile and is offered a place without needing to fulfil any academic conditions.
  - ii) A Conditional Offer – where an applicant is offered a place on the course if they meet stated conditions, for example achieving the required grade profile or undertaking a pre-entry course.
  - iii) Unsuccessful – where an applicant does not meet the required course admissions profile or is not suitable for the course following consideration of their application form and / or interview event outcome.
- 12.2 Applicants will receive a letter, normally by email, informing them of the outcome shortly after their interview event.



## 13. CLEARING PROCESS

- 13.1 “Clearing” is part of the UCAS application process which helps applicants who have not yet secured a university place to find and apply for a course. During clearing, applicants will provide the UCO’s Admissions Team with their name, UCAS ID number and contact details so that they can be identified within UCAS to enable the UCO to retrieve their application form.
- 13.2 For undergraduate courses, an extraordinary CRG meeting is normally convened at least 3 days prior to the UK’s A-level results day in August to consider applicants who have not met their conditional offer. Normal CRG members are required to attend this meeting in addition to the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) being in attendance. All decisions are compared to previous extraordinary CRG meetings and the overall admissions process throughout the academic year to ensure that standards, admissions procedures and decision-making processes are maintained and consistent.
- 13.3 Applicants will normally be interviewed via video or telephone, using the same interview questions and assessment tasks in line with those provided for applicants of the same course as appropriate.
- 13.4 The interview event outcomes and application forms of applicants applying to a course through the clearing process will be considered by Course Recruitment Groups and offers made in line with those of other applicants as described above.
- 13.5 Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application through the clearing process shortly after their interview event.

## 14. INTERNATIONAL AND EU APPLICANTS

### 14.1 ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS EQUIVALENCE

- 14.1.1 Applications from prospective international and EU students are welcomed and will be considered and processed in line with UK student applications.
- 14.1.2 Applicants with overseas qualifications will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the quoted minimum entrance requirements to be admitted to the course. An assessment of the equivalence of overseas qualifications will be made using both UK ENIC<sup>9</sup> and UCAS Qualification Information Profiles (QIPs)<sup>10</sup>.

### 14.2 VISAS AND DEPOSITS

- 14.2.1 International or EU applicants who do cannot demonstrate that they have leave to remain in the UK will need to apply for a Student Visa.
- 14.2.2 Applicants studying on a undergraduate or postgraduate course for more than 6 months will normally need to apply for a Student Visa<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.enic.org.uk/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://qips.ucas.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/study-uk-student-visa>

- 14.2.3 Applicants requiring entry clearance to enter/remain in the UK in order to study at the UCO will also be required to pay a £1,000 non-refundable deposit as a condition of the release of their “Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)” onto a place of study at the UCO. This demonstrates a measure of the seriousness of the applicant’s intention to study.
- 14.2.4 The £1,000 deposit is only required for the first year of the course and will be used as payment against the balance of course fees which are paid at enrolment. Successful applicants will have the option of paying the remainder of the course fee by instalments in line with the Course Fee Policy.
- 14.2.5 International or EU applicants who require leave to remain in the UK will be processed in line with the processes described in this policy. . However, the applicant will be requested to make compulsory deposit once they have received an "unconditional firm" offer.

### 14.3 APPLICANTS WITH ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

- 14.3.1 International or EU 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 admission profiles for their chosen course.
- 14.3.2 The UCO accepts a range of English language qualifications, but they must be equivalent to the English Language entry requirement stated in the admission profile for the chosen course of study.

## 15. APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS, CAUTIONS AND ARRESTS

- 15.1 In line with the Criminal Convictions Good Practice for Higher Education Providers guide published by UCAS<sup>12</sup>, the UCO will normally only ask applicants to disclose any criminal convictions, including any unspent convictions, for specific courses only, normally those that involve working with children or vulnerable adults.
- 15.2 An unspent criminal conviction 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, the applicant might pose a threat to staff and other students.
  - c) Specified by an accrediting PSRB.
- 15.3 While we do not wish to penalise an ex-offender, the UCO does have a duty of care to its patients and staff and there may be occasions when an academically suitable applicant will be refused entry. The UCO's policy is that applicants who declare a criminal conviction are initially reviewed on the same academic grounds that apply to all applicants. It is the responsibility of applicants to inform the UCO of any convictions

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ucas.com/criminal-convictions-good-practice-he-providers>

occurring after the application has been submitted and throughout their time at the UCO in line with our Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Policy and Procedure<sup>13</sup>.

- 15.4 For some courses an enhanced DBS check may be included as an additional entry requirement and / or a condition of enrolment. Where this is the case, this will be clearly stated in the admissions profile for the course which is set out in the Course Information Form (CIF) for the course and on the course webpage.
- 15.5 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 UCO's DBS Policy, which contains a risk assessment procedure. The applicant will then have the option of completing an early DBS check or contacting the UCO's Registrar to begin the DBS risk assessment process. The Registrar will then notify the applicant of the outcome of their application outcome on completion of the DBS check and / or DBS risk assessment process.
- 15.6 Where a DBS check is required as a condition of enrolment for a course, all enrolling students will be required to have completed and cleared the DBS check by a given deadline. Students who do not complete enrolment procedures may be withdrawn from their course.
- 15.7 Applicants are advised to read guidance published by the relevant PSRB regarding any DBS concerns prior to applying for their chosen course or to contact the UCO's Admissions Team for assistance ([admissions@uco.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uco.ac.uk)).

## 16. HEALTH ASSESSMENTS & DISABILITY SUPPORT

- 16.1 The UCO is an inclusive environment and encourages applications from those with a disability in line with our Disability Policy<sup>14</sup> or those with a health condition where additional support or adjustments to study may be needed.
- 16.2 The UCO considers someone to have a disability if they have either a physical or mental impairment which is long term and has a substantial long-term effect on their ability to study or carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 16.3 The UCO considers someone to have a health condition if they have a diagnosed medical condition which similarly is long term and may have a substantial long-term effect on their ability to study or carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 16.4 All applicants are encouraged to disclose a disability or health condition at the earliest stage possible so adjustments, where reasonable, can be made during the application process.
- 16.5 Where applicants have declared a disability or health condition, the Admissions Team will invite them to have a discussion with a member of the Student Support Department to discuss support queries.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 16.6 Where a student has complex needs, and may have difficulties satisfying the course requirements, the Student Support Officer will discuss the matter with the applicant to obtain as much information and evidence on their disability or health condition. If there are still concerns after the discussions, the Student Support Officer may refer the matter to the UCO's Occupational Health Committee to consider in further detail.
- 16.7 In the unlikely event that a student's disability or health condition means they cannot fulfil the course requirements, the Student Support Officer will inform the applicant as soon as possible. The UCO will seek to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate applicants and students with a disability or health condition wherever possible.
- 16.8 For some courses a Health Assessment may be an additional entry requirement and / or a condition of enrolment. Where this is the case, this will be clearly stated in the admissions profile for the course which is set out in the Course Information Form (CIF) for the course and on the course webpage. Such courses are normally those accredited by a PSRB requiring students to be aware of their own health or fitness to practise, where a course has specific physical (mobility) requirements, and / or involves working with children or vulnerable adults.
- 16.9 Health Assessments are undertaken in line with our Health Policy and normally involve students completing an online health questionnaire and a follow-up meeting with the Student Support Officer if a disability or health condition is disclosed.
- 16.10 Where a health assessment is required as a condition of enrolment for a course, all enrolling students will be required to have completed the health assessment form by a given deadline. Students who do not complete enrolment procedures may be withdrawn from their course.
- 16.11 Applicants are advised to read guidance published by the relevant PSRB regarding any disability or health concerns prior to applying for their chosen course or to contact the UCO's Admissions Team for assistance ([admissions@uco.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uco.ac.uk)).

## 17. COURSE FEES AND FINANCE

- 17.1 Course fees<sup>15</sup> and additional course costs<sup>16</sup> are made available to applicants on the respective course webpages of the UCO's website.
- 17.2 All offer holders must complete a Fee Assessment Form<sup>17</sup> in addition to providing a copy of the personal details page of their current passport, all visas and stamps, including relevant documents to support their form following the issuing of an offer and prior to the course enrolment procedures. The information is used to assess and confirm the course fees applicable to each student and establish whether an applicant is eligible to study in the UK.

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<sup>15</sup> [Course fees | University College of Osteopathy \(uco.ac.uk\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Additional costs | University College of Osteopathy \(uco.ac.uk\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Fee status | University College of Osteopathy \(uco.ac.uk\)](#)

17.3 All applicants should ensure they read our Course Fee Policy<sup>18</sup> so that they clearly understand what we expect of students and what students can expect when paying their course fees. The policy details essential information relating to fees and payment of fees. Conditions outlined in the policy include:

- a) Your course fee liability if you withdraw from your course.
- b) Your responsibilities for paying fees and sanctions for non-payment of fees.
- c) An annual review, so fees are likely to increase year on year.
- d) The amount payable which is not only dependent on your course but also your fee status.

17.4 Further information about course fees can be found at:

<https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/course-fees>

## 18. DATA PROTECTION

18.1 The provisions of this policy should be read in conjunction with the UCO's Data Protection Policy, which aligns to the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, and the UCO's Privacy Notice for Prospective and Current Students, both of which are publicly available on our website here:

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

18.2 All applicant data including application forms, interview sheets and qualifications are collected in an electronic file for each applicant for the duration of application process. Access is restricted to the Admissions Team and Registry Teams, where for successful applicants, the Registry Team will add to the file for the duration of the student's course of study at the UCO plus 6 years in line with the UCO's Records and Information Retention Schedule.

18.3 Any applicants that defer their application to the following year / intake of a course are kept filed with the Admissions Team for a further year and will be contacted using the email or contact details provided on their application form. Applicants in this situation are also encouraged to keep in contact with the Admissions Team during their period of deferral if they require any information or advice.

18.4 Application forms, interview sheets and qualifications of applicants who withdraw before the course starts or decline an offer are kept for the next academic year in line with the UCO's Records and Information Retention Schedule and should they wish to reconsider their application or offer. If applicants do not reconsider their application or offer, their application information is securely disposed of to maintain confidentiality and a new application would need to be submitted.

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<sup>18</sup> [Course Fee Policy | University College of Osteopathy \(uco.ac.uk\)](#)

## 19. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 19.1 This policy is informed by the monitoring and evaluation of all admissions-related processes as follows:
- a) An annual review of admissions processes, including consultation to review performance and efficiency.
  - b) Formal annual reviews of entry profiles and decision-making criteria, including new qualifications, in addition to ad hoc revisions where necessary.
  - c) A bi-annual audit of decision-making to ensure consistency in offer making.
  - d) An annual review of application data to inform course development.

## 20. ADMISSIONS APPEAL PROCEDURE

- 20.1 The UCO is committed to delivering an admissions service that is fair and transparent and in accordance with this policy. If applicants are unhappy with a decision made about their application, we encourage them to initially raise the matter informally with a member of the Admissions Team ([admissions@uco.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uco.ac.uk)) to obtain feedback.
- 20.2 Applicants may, however, request a formal review of an admissions decision / outcome if they believe that the UCO did not consider any aspect of their application in accordance with this admissions policy or the published admissions profiles, entry requirements or selection criteria, or their application was not considered fairly. This is defined as an appeal.
- 20.3 If an applicant's application was unsuccessful on the basis of not meeting the academic requirements, they have no right to appeal the admission decision.
- 20.4 If an applicant has made false statements about their academic achievements, the UCO reserves the right to revoke any offer made. There will then be no right to appeal.
- 20.5 If an applicant has made a false claim on their DBS disclosure and is deemed to have a high-risk status, the UCO reserves the right to investigate the matter in line with our Academic Discipline Procedure and revoke any offer made and reject the student's application. There will then be no right to appeal.
- 20.6 Appeals should be made in writing using the Admissions Appeal & Complaint Form ([Appendix 1](#)) and submitted to the Complaints Officer ([complaints@uco.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@uco.ac.uk)) within 14 working days of receipt of the admission decision. Appeals made outside of this timeframe will not be considered, unless there are valid reasons why the applicant could not be made within the time scale
- 20.7 An appeal should be made by the applicant. Appeals made on behalf of the applicant by parents, representatives, school or another third party will only be considered in exceptional cases where there are clear reasons for doing so. In cases where the applicant has requested that a third-party representative should act on their behalf written consent must be provided from the applicant to confirm that this is the case.
- 20.8 The appeal must clearly set out the reasons why a request to review an admission decision is being submitted, with clear reference to the published admission profile,



entry requirement, selection criteria or policy the applicant believes has not been applied when a decision has been made.

- 20.9 The Complaints Officer will assess appeals against the criteria set out in paragraphs 20.2 to 20.6.
- 20.10 If an appeal does not meet the criteria, the Complaints Officer will communicate this outcome to the applicant usually within 10 working days of the appeal being submitted.
- 20.11 If an appeal does meet the criteria set out under paragraph 20.2 it will be passed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) who will consider the appeal and determine whether the appeal is upheld and any relevant outcome, which could include reversal of an admission decision.
- 20.12 Following the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)'s consideration of an appeal, the Complaints Officer will communicate their decision to the appellant, usually within 20 working days of the appeal being submitted.
- 20.13 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)'s decision is final and there is no further recourse to pursue an appeal with the UCO. If applicants wish to pursue the matter further, they may do so using external agencies of their choice and at their own expense such as:
- a) Consumer Protection Rights (<https://www.gov.uk/consumer-protection-rights>).
  - b) Citizens Advice (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/>).
  - c) Other dispute resolution or legal advice agency.
- 20.14 If an applicant wishes to raise a concern about any other aspect of the admissions process or service provided by the UCO including staff conduct or the way in which the UCO has handled the admissions process, they should make a complaint using the Admissions Complaint Procedure set out in Section 21.

## 21. ADMISSIONS COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

### 21.1 INTRODUCTION

- 21.1.1 The UCO is committed to delivering a high quality, efficient and fair admissions service in line with the above admissions policy. If an applicant wishes to make a formal complaint, the UCO will follow this procedure to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, consistently and with due regard to the Equality Act.

### 21.2 SCOPE

- 21.2.1 The complaint procedure below sets out how an applicant may raise a complaint about the UCO's admission processes and services.
- 21.2.2 A complaint under this policy is defined as the expression of a particular concern specifically where applicants wish to raise concerns related to procedural error, maladministration or irregularity in admissions processes, policy, or procedure. A complaint does not relate to appeals against an admissions decision, which should be made under the appeal procedure.

- 21.2.3 To raise concerns about an admission decision which relates to how selection and course requirement criteria have been applied, applicants should follow the Admission Appeals Procedure set out in Section 20 of this policy.

### 21.3 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 21.3.1 In most cases an applicant's complaint can be handled fairly, amicably and to the satisfaction of all concerned without the necessity of a formal complaint.
- 21.3.2 The UCO will ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently.
- 21.3.3 There will be no recrimination or discrimination against any applicant who makes a complaint.
- 21.3.4 If a complaint is upheld, the UCO will take the appropriate action and will do so promptly. If the complaint is not upheld, the reason for the decision will be communicated in a timely manner to the applicant.
- 21.3.5 An applicant making a complaint, and those whom the complaint is made about, can expect the complaint to be dealt with confidentially. It may be necessary however, to disclose information to others in order to deal with the complaint and in these circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure.
- 21.3.6 A complaint should be made by the applicant. Complaints made on behalf of the applicant by parents, representatives, school or another third party will only be considered in exceptional cases where there are clear reasons for doing so. In cases where the applicant has requested that a third-party representative should act on their behalf written consent must be provided from the applicant to confirm that this is the case. Complaints that are made anonymously cannot be dealt with under this complaint procedure.
- 21.3.7 This Complaints Procedure covers both the informal (Stage 1) and formal (Stage 2) stages in handling a complaint and includes how an applicant can appeal a complaint outcome decision (Stage 3).

### 21.4 STAGE 1: INFORMAL COMPLAINT

- 21.4.1 Most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage and applicants are encouraged to discuss any concerns they have regarding their admissions experience informally initially.
- 21.4.2 The applicant should first raise their complaint in writing with the Admissions Officer ([admissions@uco.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uco.ac.uk)).
- 21.4.3 An informal complaint must be made within 10 working days of the admissions decision or any other action of which the applicant wishes to complain. Complaints made outside of this timeframe will not be considered unless there are valid reasons why the complaint could not be made within the timescale.
- 21.4.4 The Admissions Officer in liaison with the Head of Marketing & Communication will investigate and respond to the complaint in writing within 10 working days of the complaint being made and shall retain a record of the correspondence and any action taken. If it is not possible to fully respond within the 10 working days, the



Admissions Officer or Head of Marketing & Communication will advise the complainant of the timescale for a full response.

- 21.4.5 In their response, the Admissions Officer or-Head of Marketing & Communication will draw the applicant's attention to Stage 2 of these complaint procedures, should they wish to pursue the matter formally.
- 21.4.6 The Admissions Officer or-Head of Marketing & Communication will inform the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) of any informal complaints received for monitoring and reporting purposes.
- 21.4.7 If the complaint is about a member of the Admissions Team, the complaint should be made in writing to the Complaints Officer ([complaints@uco.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@uco.ac.uk)) who in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will appoint a senior staff member not involved in the case to investigate and respond to the complaint in line with the timescales set out above

## 21.5 STAGE 2: FORMAL COMPLAINT

- 21.5.1 If the applicant is dissatisfied with their Stage 1 response or they do not wish to resolve the matter following Stage 1 procedures, they should submit, within 10 working days of receiving that response, a written complaint to the Complaints Officer using the Admissions Appeal & Complaint Form ([Appendix 1](#)). Complaints received outside of this timeframe will not be considered unless there are valid reasons why the complaint could not be made within the timescale.
- 21.5.2 The complaint should be set out to include the informal steps that have already been taken and details of any response received, a statement as to why the applicant remains dissatisfied and the outcome the applicant is seeking.
- 21.5.3 The Complaints Officer in liaison with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will determine whether the complaint is appropriate for consideration and provide a written response confirming this to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form.
- 21.5.4 Where the complaint warrants further investigation, the Complaints Officer will pass the complaint to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) who will inform any members of staff if the complaint concerns them and appoint an Investigating Officer with no prior involvement in the matter to investigate the complaint.
- 21.5.5 The Investigating Officer will speak to and seek relevant documentation from the applicant and relevant staff at their discretion and produce an Investigation Report for consideration by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) describing their findings.
- 21.5.6 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will consider the Investigation Report and determine whether the complaint is upheld or not, including any outcomes or recommendations. The outcome will be communicated to the applicant by the Complaints Officer within 30 working days of receipt of the Formal Complaint Form. If the outcome cannot be provided within this timescale, the Complaints Officer will inform the applicant of the expected timescale. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)'s decision will be final.

- 21.5.7 Following consideration of the Investigation Report and if they deem it necessary, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) may convene a hearing at which the applicant and any other persons involved may submit their views on the complaint. The hearing panel will normally comprise three senior or academic management staff who have had no prior involvement in the complaint one of whom will be allocated to Chair the proceedings by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). The hearing panel will hear and consider the views of the applicant and relevant staff, ask questions, and consider any documentary evidence to determine the outcome of the complaint. Where a hearing is convened the applicant may be accompanied by a friend or relevant for support and who is to be made known to the UCO prior to the hearing.
- 21.5.8 Following a hearing the outcome to the complaint will be communicated to the applicant by the Complaints Officer within 40 working days of receipt of the Formal Complaint Form. If the outcome cannot be provided within this timescale, the Complaints Officer will inform the applicant of the expected timescale. The hearing panel's decision will be final
- 21.5.9 If the Complaints Officer is not available to consider a formal complaint through absence or if the complaint is about the Registrar, the matter should be referred directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

## 21.6 STAGE THREE – STAGE 2 OUTCOME REVIEW

- 21.6.1 An applicant will be entitled to seek a review of the outcome of Stage 2 of the complaints process only where:
- There is evidence that Stage 2 procedures did not consider all relevant issues, and any relevant issues identified as not included at Stage 2 are material to the decision and do not constitute a new basis for complaint.
  - There is evidence that the Stage 2 investigation was not carried out in accordance with Stage 2 procedures.
- 21.6.2 The review of a Stage 2 outcome will be undertaken by the Vice-Chancellor whose decision is final.
- 21.6.3 To request a review of the Stage 2 outcome, the applicant should submit a statement in writing to the Complaints Officer ([complaints@uco.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@uco.ac.uk)) which should clearly set out the reason(s) why they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2. All details should be including all evidence produced during Stage 2 procedures.
- 21.6.4 The Complaints Officer will pass the applicant's statement and evidence to the Vice-Chancellor who will review the case, seeking further information where appropriate.
- 21.6.5 The Vice-Chancellor may resolve the case with the evidence provided or may wish to conduct a hearing where both the complainant and any persons involved may put their views forward. Where a hearing is deemed necessary, the hearing will

broadly follow the format given in the UCO's Student Complaint Policy and Procedure<sup>19</sup>.

- 21.6.6 The Vice-Chancellor's decision will be communicated to the applicant by the Complaints Officer in writing usually within 20 working days of receiving the Stage 3 review request.
- 21.6.7 In cases where a hearing is deemed necessary, the Vice-Chancellor's decision will be communicated to the applicant by the Complaints Officer in writing usually within 25 working days of receiving the Stage 3 review request.
- 21.6.8 The Vice-Chancellor's decision is final and there is no further recourse to pursue the complaint with the UCO. If applicants wish to pursue the matter further, they may do so using external agencies of their choice and at their own expense such as:
- a) Consumer Protection Rights (<https://www.gov.uk/consumer-protection-rights>).
  - b) Citizens Advice (<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/>).
  - c) Other dispute resolution or legal advice agency.

## 21.7 COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

- 21.7.1 Where a complaint is upheld in whole or in part, possible outcomes may include an apology, a clear explanation of the events or context that led to the incident in question, a change in procedures to ensure that the circumstances do not recur, referral of the complaint for consideration under another procedure or a combination of these or other outcomes.

## 21.8 MONITORING & REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

- 21.8.1 Anonymised records of informal complaints will be retained by the Head of Marketing & Communication, and formal complaints will be retained by the Complaints Officer to inform future service improvements and oversight.
- 21.8.2 Copies of all admissions complaint forms are kept on file in accordance with the UCO's Information and Record Retention Schedule<sup>20</sup> at which point they are securely disposed of.
- 21.8.3 An anonymised report on all complaints including any actions for enhancing the admissions process is made annually to the ASSC and Academic Council.

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<sup>19</sup> [Policies, Procedures and Privacy | University College of Osteopathy \(uco.ac.uk\)](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Policies, Procedures and Privacy | University College of Osteopathy \(uco.ac.uk\)](#)

## APPENDIX 1: ADMISSIONS APPEAL & COMPLAINT FORM

This form is only for the purpose of submitting an appeal or formal complaint in accordance with the UCO's Admission Appeal Procedure (Section 20 of this policy) and Admission Complaint Procedure (Section 21 of this policy). Please read these respective sections before submitting the form as we may be unable to consider an inappropriate or incomplete submission.

If you have any queries concerning the completion or submission of this form, please contact the Complaints Officer ([complaints@uco.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@uco.ac.uk)).

Surname	
First name(s)	
UCAS Personal ID: (if appropriate)	

Contact details (if different to those on the application or if an application has not been sent yet):

Email address	
Mobile phone	
Telephone (daytime)	
Address and post code	

Please tick one only:

I wish to appeal against a decision made on my application.	
<b>or</b>	
I wish to complain about a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policies.	

Please provide details of your complaint or appeal below (*continue using separate sheets if necessary*):

Are you attaching any additional documentation?		Y/N
If yes, please list the additional documentation:		
Have you already discussed your complaint or appeal informally with a member of UCO staff?		Y/N
If yes, please provide details ( <i>continue using separate sheets if necessary</i> )		

If you have any specific resolution in mind, please indicate your desired outcome(s) below. Please note any expression of preferred outcome will not prejudice our consideration of your complaint or appeal (*continue using separate sheets if necessary*):

Declaration:

I confirm that the above details and any attached documentation is a true reflection of events to the best of my knowledge and that it does not contain any false or fraudulent information. I agree to the investigating officer on behalf of the UCO sharing details of this case, including information from my application, with other persons as part of any investigation and to retain a record of that investigation, in accordance with the UCO's Admissions Policy & Procedure.

I also understand and accept that the outcome of formal complaints will be recorded for the purposes of monitoring and analysing complaints generally, and for reporting to Academic Council for monitoring and evaluation in terms of quality assurance.

Applicant's Signature:		Date:	
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Please send this form and any additional documentation to:

The Complaints Officer ([complaints@uco.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@uco.ac.uk))

You should normally expect a response within 10 working **days** of sending this form, although this may take longer over some holiday periods. If you have not received a response within a reasonable time, please contact the above person for an update.

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UCO Administrative Record – Office Use Only	
Date Received:	
Acknowledgement Sent:	
Complaint Officer's Signature:	

**CORE DOCUMENTATION RECORD PAGE**

**Admissions Policy & Procedure**

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Dates produced and approved (include committee)</b>	<b>Reason for production/ revision</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Location(s)</b>	<b>Proposed next review date and approval required</b>
V1.0	Jun 2013 Academic Council	To consolidate the admissions information into one policy with the appropriate underpinning procedures.	Admissions Officer	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jun 2015
V2.0	Mar 2014 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to reflect current staff role titles.	Admissions Tutor	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Mar 2016
V2.0	Jun 2016 N/A	Reviewed with no amendments	Admissions Tutor	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jun 2018
V3.0	Jul 2017 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update institution name change from British School of Osteopathy to UCO College of Osteopathy, weblinks and staff role titles.	Admissions Tutor	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jun 2018
V4.0	Jun 2018 Academic Council	Major Amendments: Addition of MScPR Decision Making Process information. Addition of Access Course Application Process information. Amendment to Course Recruitment Group role in decision making. Addition of Clearing process. Revision to Deposits & Visas section. Addition of Application	Admissions Tutor	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website	Jun 2019

		<p>Registration Card section.</p> <p>Amendments to Interview Events section.</p> <p>Amendment to Fees &amp; Finance section.</p> <p>Addition of Data Protection section.</p> <p>Addition of Appeals Procedure.</p> <p>Amendments to Complaints Procedure.</p> <p>Amendments to OIA section.</p> <p>Amendments to Appendices.</p>			
V5.0	July 2019 Academic Council	<p>Major Amendment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reflect new Quality Code.</li> <li>- update UCO Mission, Vision &amp; Values.</li> <li>- update weblinks.</li> <li>- update policy titles.</li> <li>- include service users in the admissions process.</li> <li>- generalise the policy to include non-osteopathic courses.</li> <li>- addition of HCPC raising concerns process.</li> <li>- addition of a complaints form.</li> </ul>	Head of Quality	<p>All master versions will be held in:</p> <p>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website</p>	Jul 2022
V6.0	Dec 2019 PRAG Chair	<p>Administrative Amendments to reflect new Committee structure</p>	Head of Quality	<p>All master versions will be held in:</p> <p>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website</p>	Jul 2022
V7.0	Dec 2022 Academic Council	<p>Major Amendments to: Re-order sections for clarity; Update information regarding Student Visas; Update weblinks and references; Revise Complaints Procedure to clarify this process and reflect changed staff</p>	Registrar & Head of Marketing & Admissions	<p>All master versions will be held in:</p> <p>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website</p>	Dec 2025



		responsibilities; Remove reference to the HCPC as no longer applicable; Remove reference to the OIA in line with OIA guidance.			
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)					
<p><b>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy, please email your comments to: <a href="mailto:quality@uco.ac.uk">quality@uco.ac.uk</a></b></p>					