



University College
of Osteopathy

Admissions Policy & Procedure

2018-2019 Entry

Core Documentation Cover Page
Admissions Policy & Procedure (2018-2019 Entry)

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
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 University 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	May 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to reflect title changes (i.e. from Principal to Vice-Chancellor, etc.)	Admissions Tutor	All master versions will be held in: J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Intranet	Jun 2018
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 policy,
please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk**

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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Our admissions policy is aligned with the UCO's Institutional Mission, Vision and Values, complies with QAA Quality Code for Higher Education :Chapter B2 - Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education¹ and all relevant equalities legislation and is guided by the principles outlined by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group, 'Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice'²

2. INSTITUTIONAL MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

A) MISSION STATEMENT

- 2.1 The UCO seeks to provide our students with the highest quality osteopathic education programmes to enable them to develop into patient-centred practitioners equipped to deal with the challenges of the modern healthcare arena. We also seek to provide evidence-informed best practice healthcare to the community. We do this by aiming to be an international centre of excellence celebrating diversity in all our activities. We provide leadership in osteopathic education, research and health care; and are committed to innovation, scholarship, professional collaboration and best practice.

B) VISION

- 2.2 The UCO will:
 - a) Lead and develop osteopathy internationally through the delivery of high quality, evidence-informed, learning opportunities for students and health care practitioners within a modern, well-resourced learning environment.
 - b) Elevate and extend its clinical provision to enable wider access for the public and voluntary sectors.
 - c) Increase its research and scholarly activity to ensure that a high proportion of faculty are routinely participating in research and scholarship activities.

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>

² <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5284/1/finalreport.pdf>

- d) Enhance its international reputation by ensuring a growth in collaborative relationships with osteopathic and other higher education institutions that hold the same commitment to excellence.
- e) Ensure that all our staff are expert in their field, highly qualified as teachers as well as their areas of expertise and fit for contemporary practice.
- f) Become an exemplar of a successful, charitable, Higher Education Institution reflected through its attainment of Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP).
- g) establish a strong, clear, unified brand that reflects its values, history and aspirations.
- h) Be well managed and governed through a strong, efficiently structured, professional management team with effective oversight provided by a Board of dedicated Trustees who hold essential knowledge in key fields including: Osteopathy, Higher Education, Law, Finance, Human Resources, Estates Management, and Fund Raising.
- i) Have a strong system of academic quality assurance which is managed through its Quality Directorate, Registry, Academic Council, and Academic Council sub committees.
- j) Provide a range of short professional development programmes in all its chosen fields to promote lifelong learning and continuing professional development.
- k) Become an employer of choice for staff through its commitment to scholarship, personal career development, equal opportunities, diversity and the provision of a stimulating and excellent working environment.
- l) Build a culture where all staff take interest in the work of others, recognise and celebrate success, participate fully in the UCO's academic, cultural and social activities and engage with alumni.

C) UNDERPINNING CORE VALUES

2.3 Full realisation of our mission can only be achieved with the collaboration of everyone in the UCO. Individual attitudes and behaviour are key to the UCO's success. The values and conduct to which staff aspire, and that we wish to foster and sustain are as follows:

- a) Students and patients will always come first
- b) A culture of critical enquiry, scholarship and research
- c) A respect for the heritage and values of osteopathy
- d) A respect for creativity and innovation
- e) A respect for equal opportunities
- f) A celebration of diversity
- g) A culture of openness and honesty
- h) A culture of collaboration and teamwork
- i) A desire for environmental sustainability

2.4 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.

- 2.5 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 programme.
- 2.6 Applications from students with additional needs will be considered on the same criteria as all others. Candidates with additional needs are invited to contact Disability and Dyslexia Support Staff to discuss the level of support available.
- 2.7 The UCO will facilitate timely responses to enquiries and applications, ensuring that all necessary documentation is sent at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 Admission decisions will be made within this broad policy statement, in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy and with regard to each Course's specific entry and selection criteria.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Responsibility for the UCO Admissions Policy and procedures lies with the Widening Participation and Admissions Strategy Group. Details of terms of reference and committee membership can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Widening Participation and Admissions Strategy Group is, in turn, responsible to Academic Council, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 3.3 Individual course teams have admission sub groups of the Course Team (Course Recruitment Groups) who are allocated the responsibility of reviewing all applicants to that course. Terms of reference can be found in Appendix 2.

4. ENTRY PROFILES

- 4.1 The UCO will make available Admissions Profiles for all its academic courses; this information is contained within the Course Information Form (CIF). All admissions decisions will be made against the criteria detailed in the admissions profile.
- 4.2 Each profile will specify:
 - a) Typical academic entry requirements
 - b) Other accepted experience and/or qualities
- 4.3 Admissions profiles will be made available via the CIF on the UCO's website, the UCAS website for undergraduate full time courses, and in the UCO's prospectus for all other courses.
- 4.4 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 two types of prior learning of applicants, either as a basis for entry to a course or to exempt applicants from some of the requirements, as explained in our Academic Regulations. These are:
 - a) Transfer credit.
 - b) Recognition of prior learning (RPL), both certified and experiential as specified by the Academic Quality Framework and in line with the UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (Appendix 3).
- 4.5 The authority to consider requests for transfer of credit is delegated by Academic Council to Course Leaders with authority to admit applicants to the relevant course.

5. DECISION MAKING

5.1 UNDERGRADUATE FULL TIME

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

5.2 UNDERGRADUATE PART TIME

5.2.1 Applications to undergraduate part-time courses will be made directly to the UCO via the UCO's online or paper application form.

5.3 POSTGRADUATE

5.3.1 Applications to postgraduate courses are submitted directly to the UCO using the UCO's online or paper application form.

5.4 THE APPLICATION PROCESS

5.4.1 Those applicants not meeting the selection criteria of their chosen course may be considered for, and offered, an alternative course. If an application is unsuccessful the reason for rejection is recorded to provide applicants with feedback if requested. Although minimum entry requirements for undergraduate courses are set in the CIF, conditional offers will be made in the context of the qualification being studied and offered for assessment for entry.

5.5 ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

5.5.1 Applications from prospective International students will be considered and processed consistently with Home/EU applications.

5.5.2 Those applicants offering overseas qualifications will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the quoted minimum entrance requirements to enrol. Assessment will be made using both UK NARIC and the UCAS Guide to International Qualifications.

5.5.3 Applicants that have 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 entry profiles.

6. DEPOSITS AND VISAS

6.1 Those applicants requiring entry clearance to enter/remain in the UK in order to study at UCO will be required to pay a £600 non-refundable deposit as a condition of the release of their Certificate of Acceptance onto a place of study at the UCO. It is a measure of the seriousness of applicant's intention to study and is being introduced at the same time as the UK Border Agency Points Based System (Tier 4).

6.2 The £600 deposit is only required for the first year of the course and will 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 the fee by instalments.

6.3 Applications from overseas students will be processed as per the normal admissions procedures. However, wording contained within conditional offer letters and unconditional offer letters will signal to students the necessity of making payment of the compulsory deposit once the applicant has reached "unconditional firm" stage.

7. SIMILARITY DETECTION

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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. Full details can be found at <https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity>
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 The applicant's response will then be discussed along with their application at the following Course Recruitment Group meeting.

8. INTERVIEW EVENTS

- 8.1 All short listed candidates will be invited to attend Interview Events at the UCO. They are informed in advance of details of the selection procedures, thus allowing for an opportunity to discuss any special requirements or needs prior to attending.
- 8.2 The purpose of the interview events are to confirm whether candidates have the potential aptitude, motivation and personal qualities to succeed on their desired course. The Interview Events are designed to appeal to the needs of the applicants, providing all applicants with an equal opportunity to demonstrate to the Interview Teams that they are the right candidates and have the potential to become successful students.
- 8.3 The Interview Processes for all courses are reviewed annually and are developed each year, if necessary, based on feedback from students, staff and faculty and on any relevant Higher Education and Institutional or Course changes.

9. DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS) AND HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRES

- 9.1 Courses requiring DBS and the completion of a health assessment form will have this clearly stated in their CIF and the UCO prospectus. The UCO's current DBS Policy, Health Policy for Pre-Registration Students and the Pre-Registration Student Health Assessment Form are detailed in Appendices 4 - 6.
- 9.2 Successful applicants to any Pre-Registration Osteopathy course will be required to complete the Pre-Registration Student Health Assessment Form as a condition of enrolment.
- 9.3 Successful applicants to any Pre-Registration Osteopathy course will be required to undergo Police record checks, carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service, as a condition of enrolment.

10. APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS, CAUTIONS AND ARRESTS

- 10.1 UCAS advice states: 'An applicant who has a relevant criminal conviction that is not spent is required to state this on their application. 'Relevant' is defined in Apply as

offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, or offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant. Certain courses, for example, teaching, health, social work, veterinary medicine, veterinary science or courses involving work with children or vulnerable adults, do not come under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.'

- 10.2 A criminal conviction not yet spent shall not normally be a bar to entry to a course unless:
- a) The programme 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 Professional Body.
- 10.3 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 occurring after the application has been submitted and throughout their time at the UCO.
- 10.4 As a condition of acceptance/continuation, all registering students are required to have completed and cleared an enhanced criminal record disclosure by a given deadline.
- 10.5 Where the 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 and 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 Risk Assessment Process. The Registrar will then notify the applicant of the outcome of their application.

11. FEES AND FINANCE

- 11.1 The British UCO of Osteopathy offers its students financial assistance in the form of loans, bursaries and advice. Funding includes the UCO Student Loan, Widening Participation Bursary and support offered through external charities such as the Osteopathic Educational Foundation. Many students are also eligible for government support for tuition fees and maintenance costs via Student Finance England. Where applicable, students can also apply for assistance with childcare costs and Disabled Students' Allowances.
- 11.2 Financial assistance is also offered to students paying their course fees up-front in the form of payment plans to spread the cost across the academic year.

12. DISABILITY AND DYSLEXIA SUPPORT

- 12.1 Applications to the UCO's courses will be assessed purely on academic grounds.
- 12.2 The Admissions Team identify applicants who have declared a disability. These applicants will be invited to have a discussion with a member of the Disability and Learning Support team to identify and agree relevant support requirements. Where

the student has complex needs, the Course Leader will also be invited to a preliminary discussion about course requirements.

- 12.3 Disability and Dyslexia Support will, guided by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), inform the applicant of the reasonable adjustments the UCO can make in relation to their disability. Based on this information, it will be the applicant's decision as to whether or not they wish to accept the offer of a place on a course. In the unlikely event that the UCO is unable to make a reasonable adjustment, the Student Support Manager will inform the applicant as soon as possible.
- 12.4 Please note, successful applicants to Pre-Registration Courses, will be required to complete the Pre-Registration Student Health Assessment Form before being allowed to enrol.
- 12.5 The UCO will be proactive in encouraging disclosure and will, when an offer is made, include the sentence, 'If you have a disability, please contact the Student Support Manager on 0207 089 5334 to discuss your needs'.

13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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

14. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

- 14.1 An applicant has the right to complain or appeal against a decision made by the UCO.
- 14.2 Appeals or complaints should be made in writing to the Registrar.
- 14.3 The Registrar will carry out an initial investigation of the circumstances leading to the appeal or complaint.
- 14.4 If the appeal or complaint is made on academic grounds it will be passed to the relevant Course Leader for review.
- 14.5 If the appeal or complaint is made on administrative grounds it will be passed to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
- 14.6 The Registrar will communicate the decision, which is final, to the appellant.

A) INTRODUCTION TO COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

- 14.7 A complaint is defined as the expression of a specific concern. This policy document concerns a complaint made against the admissions department, including the operation of all admissions services and the conduct of admissions personnel.
- 14.8 All admissions personnel try their utmost to adhere to the above principles, especially core values one, five, six and seven as these pertain most directly to student recruitment.

- 14.9 If, at any time, any of the above principles are breached then it is in the best interest of the UCO to investigate the matter thoroughly and efficiently to ensure that the UCO remains consistently fair to all potential students.
- 14.10 The UCO appreciates all types of feedback and understands that some students may not be satisfied with the UCO's admissions process. The Admissions Complaints Procedure ensures that any complaint is fairly dealt with and taken seriously.
- 14.11 The UCO will keep a secure record of all complaints for audit and review purposes to ensure that each complaint was dealt with in a fair and consistent manner. The complaints procedure is intended to operate proceedings fairly and to investigate and respond to student complaints adapting these proceedings to meet the particulars of a given complaint.

B) PRINCIPLES OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 14.12 The underlying principles of the complaints procedure include:
- Complaints should be dealt with seriously and fairly;
 - Complaints should be investigated promptly. Generally, complaints made more than three months after the incident occurred will not normally be considered;
 - All complaints will be dealt with on their individual merits. In accordance with the equal opportunities policy, all complainants will be treated equally.
 - Submission of a complaint will not lead to recrimination or adversely affect academic progression provided it is made in good faith and not maliciously or vexatiously;
 - Confidentiality will be respected throughout;
- 14.13 Those who investigate or adjudicate on behalf of a complainant will do so impartially, fairly and under the principles of natural justice;
- 14.14 In the event of a hearing, complainants will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend or relative.

C) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 14.15 The following restrictions apply to making a complaint against the UCO's admissions process:
- 14.16 If an applicant was rejected on the basis of not meeting the academic requirements, they have no right to appeal against the decision made by the Admissions Team.
- 14.17 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 of appeal.
- 14.18 If a student has made a false claim on their criminal records bureau disclosure and is deemed to have a high risk status the UCO will revoke any offer made and reject the student's application. There will then be no right of appeal.
- 14.19 There are three stages to the complaints procedure, the informal stage, the formal stage and the appeals stage.

D) STAGE ONE – THE INFORMAL STAGE

- 14.20 Students who have a complaint about an administrative function or service are advised to discuss their complaint with the Admissions Tutor or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) informally in the first instance. It is expected that most

complaints will be resolved amicably and quickly in this informal manner. Informal complaints should normally be dealt within five working days.

- 14.21 Records of informal complaints will not normally be retained by the Admissions Tutor unless the complainant or the member of staff concerned desires them to do so. In this case a complaints form should be completed.
- 14.22 It is hoped that this informal procedure will enable most complaints to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved in this informal manner, the student may then proceed to the formal stage.

E) STAGE TWO – THE FORMAL STAGE

- 14.23 A complaint that cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally may then be submitted formally as follows:
- a) The details of the complaint should be recorded on a complaints form, which are available upon request from the Registrar;
 - b) Copies of all complaints forms are sent to the Registrar and are kept on file for 5 years and then destroyed;
 - c) A report on all formal complaints (not including the names of students or staff) is made annually to the Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Council.
- 14.24 Complainants are urged to submit their complaints as quickly as possible after the incident being complained about, and after no more than, three months. Copies of the complaints form can be requested from the Registrar. The completed complaints form should be submitted to Registrar.
- 14.25 Once the form has been submitted the following actions will be taken with immediate effect:
- a) The Registrar will provide a written acknowledgment to the complainant;
 - b) The Registrar will pass the complaint to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education);
 - c) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will inform any members of staff concerned that a complaint concerning them has been received;
 - d) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will appoint an investigating officer to look into the complaint, seeking relevant documentation from any member of staff or student/applicant at his/her discretion. The investigating officer will then produce a report for consideration by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
 - e) 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 if they deem it necessary. Normally a written decision as to whether the complaint will be upheld will be provided to the complainant within fifteen working days of receiving the initial complaint. In cases where a hearing is deemed necessary, a written decision as to whether the complaint will be upheld will normally be made within twenty-five working days of receiving the complaint;
 - f) The reasons for the decision of the outcome will normally be given.
- 14.26 Any person appointed to investigate a complaint must not have had any prior direct involvement in the matter.

F) STAGE THREE – THE APPEAL STAGE

- 14.27 If the student is not, for any reason, satisfied with the outcome of the Formal Stage of the procedure, s/he may take the complaint further by referring it to the Vice-Chancellor.

- 14.28 The complainant should submit a statement in writing to the Vice-Chancellor which should clearly set out the reason(s) why s/he is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two. All details should be provided to the Vice-Chancellor, including all evidence produced during Stage Two procedures. The Vice-Chancellor will review the case and if necessary employ further actions or seek advice pertaining to that particular complaint.
- 14.29 The Vice-Chancellor may resolve the case with the documentation provided or may wish to conduct a hearing where both the complainant and any persons involved may put their views forward.
- 14.30 A decision will normally be communicated to the complainant in writing within twenty working days of submission of a referral to the Vice-Chancellor. This decision will be final.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Widening Participation and Admissions Strategy Group Terms of Reference

http://intranet.bso.ac.uk/BSO_Committees/

Appendix 2: Course Recruitment Group Terms of Reference

http://intranet.bso.ac.uk/BSO_Committees/

Appendix 3: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

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

Appendix 4: Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Policy & Procedure

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

Appendix 5: Health Policy for Pre-Registration Students

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

Appendix 6: Health Policy for Pre-Registration Students - Health Assessment Form

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