

POSTGRADUATE ADMISSIONS POLICY

Introduction

1. Admissions criteria related to academic standards, including English language criteria, transfer credit and offer levels/thresholds, are set by the Academic Board, and reported to the Board of Trustees.
2. Once approved by Academic Board, the admissions criteria appear in the Admissions Policy for the relevant year and are published on the University website.
3. Admissions and the University Recruitment Team provide advice, guidance and recommendations on the general acceptability and equivalence of a range of entry qualifications using UK ENIC (Ecctis) and United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) guidelines.
4. Admissions provides semesterly updates on admissions entry criteria and statistical trends to the Academic Board. The Office of the Provost will report this data to the Board of Trustees.
5. The final decision over and responsibility for the admission of any student belongs to the Provost, as Chair of the Academic Board, reporting to the President and the Board of Trustees.
6. Monitoring and review of admissions for each programme is undertaken by the Academic Board within the annual monitoring cycle, through 5-year review/revalidation exercises, and externally via formal reviews of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and the Office for Students.

Admission Decisions and Offers

7. The University applies standard admissions criteria across a range of entry qualifications. All applications are assessed on the following with consideration given to equality, adjustment, and the ability to benefit from the programme of study:
 - a. Fee status is applied based on the information provided by the applicant at the point of application;
 - b. Prior academic achievement, or prior experiential learning;
 - c. Any expected results in formal examinations;
 - d. English language qualification;
 - e. Personal statement in support of the application;
 - f. Referee's statement;

- g. Performance at interview (where applicable)
 - h. Suitability for intended profession (where a programme provides professional training and post-qualification registration).
8. Applications from candidates holding non-standard qualifications are referred to a member of faculty for review and comment. The University may invite such candidates to interview.
 9. The University issues two types of offers based on the information presented in the application form and on supporting evidence provided by the applicant:
 - a. A Conditional Offer is issued to prospective students who have submitted an application but have not been able to evidence that they have met the admission requirements.
 - b. An Unconditional Offer is issued to prospective students who have demonstrated that they have met the University's admission requirements, by supplying documentary evidence of their completed academic qualification, English language test results, and any other stipulated supporting documents.
 10. Official electronic offer letters and all other communications are sent to the email address supplied by the applicant on their application.

Admission Requirements – Academic

11. Admissions requirements or entry criteria are defined as the minimum threshold of academic and English language achievement that all applicants should meet to be considered for admission to an academic programme.
12. An admissions requirement is expressed both in terms of a qualification at a specific study level, and a specified grade or result to be achieved, and is communicated to the applicant in a Conditional Offer Letter.
13. The minimum academic requirement for admission to a postgraduate programme is normally a UK undergraduate degree with minimum second class honours (2.2), or a US undergraduate degree with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.500, or an international equivalent. The University accepts a wide range of international undergraduate degree award qualifications. The University may consider candidates with substantial relevant work experience in lieu of a first degree.
14. A summary of the University's academic admissions requirements is published on the University website.

Admission Requirements – English Language

15. Applicants who are non-native speakers of English or are not nationals of a majority English-speaking country, or do not possess a first degree from a majority English

speaking country, as defined by the United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI), are required to provide evidence of their English language proficiency with a recognised English language test qualification. English language requirements vary by programme. Please see the University website and programme pages for programme-specific requirements and a list of acceptable English language proficiency tests.

Entry with Transfer Credit

16. Postgraduate applicants who have accumulated credit at FHEQ Level 7 may request to have this credit applied to degree requirements on taught Masters programmes. Please see Postgraduate Transfer Credit Policy for further details.
17. The University will provide an estimate of transfer credit and of time to completion expressed in semesters. Final verification of credit to be transferred and study time to completion will be made by Registry Services, using final transcripts, after the student has accepted their offer, although earlier evaluations may be made upon request.

Equality of Opportunity

18. The University is committed to equal opportunities policies through which all students are selected based on the ability to benefit from their selected programme of study.
19. If an applicant declares a disability and/or special educational need, this is referred to Student Affairs who work confidentially with the applicant to determine the appropriate level of support to be provided by the University for the selected programme of study, and that this will be achievable with reasonable adjustments.
20. Where appropriate support cannot be provided even with reasonable adjustments, this will be discussed with the applicant and, where relevant, alternative programmes explored. The University also ensures that any reasonable adjustments to the applicant assessment process are put in place.
21. When an applicant declares a criminal record, this is considered by Student Affairs with appropriate professional input and in relation to the programme applied for, to decide whether the University can proceed with the application.
22. Registry Services assesses the applications of those who have previously studied at Richmond – former students should consult and follow the University's Readmission policy. Where an applicant has previously applied, the outcome of the previous application may be relevant to the outcome of the current application.

Age

23. The minimum age for admission is 18 years of age.

Joining the University

24. When offering a place, the University ensures that a prospective student understands:

- a. the obligations involved in taking up their place;
- b. the availability of further advice and guidance before joining the University;
- c. how to enroll.

25. All Admissions Offers are accompanied by:

- a. a student contract to be signed and returned on take up of offer;
- b. a telephone number and an e-mail address for a named enquiry contact in Admissions;
- c. details of how to progress the application, including verification of qualifications and other documentation and, if the offer is conditional, details of what to do if conditions are not fully met;
- d. details of how to obtain further information to aid decision making, including open and visit days, telephone support from current students, Faculty and Admissions staff;
- e. academic regulations and policies including relevant award regulations;
- f. academic integrity and student conduct policies;
- g. programme specification and course descriptors;
- h. details of fees, housing and financial support information, including scholarships;
- i. an orientation timetable is shared with applicants who have accepted their study offer by Student Affairs prior to enrolment.

Programme Closure and Changes Policy for Prospective Students

26. The University makes every reasonable effort to avoid changes to or closure of an academic programme for which an offer has been made to a prospective student.

27. When programme closure or major changes are necessary, Admissions provides written notification of programme change and/or closure, and presents alternative study options to each applicant, intended to ensure that the applicant's study intentions can be met. In such cases, Admissions discusses the options directly with the applicant and offers one or more of the following options as circumstances allow:

- a. deferral of the study offer by one or more semesters if appropriate;
- b. transfer of the offer to an alternative programme for the original entry semester;
- c. transfer of the offer to the same or similar programme at another University.

Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

28. On request, Admissions will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Where a prospective student with a disability or special educational needs is unsuccessful because it is not possible to support them adequately, even with reasonable adjustments and after exploring alternative University programmes, Student Affairs will provide feedback which may include potential options elsewhere.

29. The University only considers appeals which are made:

- a. against a final decision on an application;
- b. made by the applicant in writing to the Head of Admissions;
- c. received by the University within five working days of the date on which the University first informed the applicant of the final outcome of their application; and made on the following grounds:
 - i. relevant and material information was not made available to the University at the time of application, through no fault of the applicant; and/or
 - ii. the way the University dealt with the application differed materially and significantly from written policy and procedure.

30. The complaints procedure cannot be used to appeal against the outcome of an application

31. For more information relating to admissions appeals and complaints, see Complaints Policy for Non-Academic Related Matters.

VERSION MANAGEMENT

Responsible Department: Admissions			
Approving body: Academic Board			
Version no.	Key Changes	Date of approval	Date of effect
001		24 July 2018	28 August 2018
002	Minor editorial changes	20 September 2018	20 September 2018
003	Updated English language requirements	25 June 2020	11 August 2020
004	Editorial changes, updated English language and pre-sessional information, updated appeals timeline	June 2021	30 August 2021
005	3+2+M requirements added, change to PG interview requirement	May 2022	01 September 2022
006	Changed Provost to the Office of the Provost	June 2023	Sep 2023
007	Updated English language requirements and entry requirements, removed underage admission and safeguarding information, minor editorial changes	July 2024	Sept 2024
		Restricted access? <i>Tick as appropriate</i> ☐ Yes ☒ No	