The Registry
Admissions Office

Taught Admissions Code of Practice

1. General Principles

1.1 Admissions Statement

The University is committed to providing an admissions service which is both professional and fair, and which facilitates the entry to the University of those candidates who will engage with and contribute to the intellectual and cultural vitality of the institution.

1.2 National Legislation and Guidelines

This code defines the terms, and details the key principles, material to the processing of taught[1] applications for admission to the University of East Anglia. It conforms to the precepts of the Quality Assurance Agency's Code of Practice[2] (See Appendix 1) and assures the principles of transparency and consistency in the admissions process. It is envisaged that this code will change and evolve in response to practical experience as well as to any changes in the QAA code of practice or University policy.

The University recognises the following legislation as relevant to the admissions process:

Age Discrimination Act 2006
Data Protection Act 1998
Disability Discrimination Act 2005
Equality Act (Sexual orientation) Regulations 2007
Freedom of Information Act 2000
Human Rights Act 1998
Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001

1.3 Institutional Regulation

This policy is approved by the University Senate and is reviewed by the Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing Committee (RAM) and its Executive.

2. Admissions Staff

2.1 Director of Admissions

The Director of Admissions is an academic member of staff appointed by the Vice Chancellor to lead on all matters in relation to the recruitment and admission of students to the University. The Director Chairs the Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing Committee (RAM) and its Executive, whose membership includes Associate Deans for Admissions, the Director of the Marketing and Communications

[1] ie all Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors and Masters Degree courses other than those by research
[2] QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education, Section 10: Admissions To Higher Education – www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section10/default.asp

Division, Faculty Admissions Managers and the Heads of Marketing and Admissions Services, Recruitment, International and Outreach Office and Planning Office.

2.2 Associate Deans for Admissions

Associate Deans for Admissions are academic members of staff appointed by the Dean of Faculty to lead on admissions policy and strategy for the Faculty. They develop University policy and strategy in consultation with the membership of the Recruitment and Marketing Committee (RAM), its Executive and Admissions Officers in their own Faculty. The Associate Dean for Admissions has responsibility for agreeing and securing admissions against Faculty student targets each year.

2.3 Admissions Officers

Admissions Officers are academic members of staff appointed by the Head of School to take responsibility for admissions in relation to a particular course or courses of study, including compliance with this code of practice. Within a Faculty, Admissions Officers act within a policy framework determined in consultation with the Associate Dean for Admissions and Admissions Manager, to whom they report for admissions purposes.

Although the Admissions Officer has ultimate responsibility for all decisions taken and admissions criteria in respect of the courses for which they are appointed, they may nonetheless delegate certain decision making responsibilities to the Faculty Admissions Office under the guidance of the Faculty Admissions Manager. In certain circumstances members of Marketing and Admissions Services and Recruitment, International and Outreach Office may also be delegated such responsibility for a time limited period

Both Admissions Officers and their nominated delegates will act in compliance with this code of practice

2.4 Faculty Admissions Office (FAO) Staff

Each Faculty has an Admissions Office managed by a Faculty Admissions Manager. Each Faculty Admissions Manager and invited representatives sits on RAM executive. RAM Executive is mandated by Recruitment and Marketing Committee with implementing policy and developing process. Staff members of the Faculty Admissions Office generate enquiries and applications for the Faculty, and provide systems and process support to the Admissions Officers.

2.5 Marketing and Admissions Services (MAS), Recruitment, International and Outreach Office (RIO) Staff

Staff members of Marketing and Admissions Services and Recruitment, International and Outreach Office also generate enquiries and applications for the University, and provide institutional systems and process support so that these may be processed by Faculty Admissions Offices. Members of staff in these Offices are available to advise Admissions staff in Faculties, Schools and Units on matters of institutional and national policy and practice in respect of outreach, recruitment and admissions. Marketing and Admissions Services provides the framework for and leads on the University admissions, market research and customer relationship management programmes.

2.6 Training

All Admissions managers have a responsibility to ensure that they and the staff they line manage are appropriately trained for the duties that they undertake in connection with admissions, and be alert to such issues as confidentiality, equal opportunities, consistency and transparency. An annual training programme is offered by Marketing and Admissions Services and is described on the Admissions Intranet.

3. Admissions and Related Publicity

3.1 The University produces a range of publicity materials and events for prospective applicants and other key stakeholders in the admissions process, including

Publicity	Responsibility
Prospectus UG/PGT	MAC
Course Brochures	FAO
UCAS Entry Profiles	MAC/FAO
Admissions entry on web at Institutional level	MAC
Admissions entry on web at School level	FAO
Pre-Application Open Days	MAC/FAO
Post-Offer Visit Days	MAC/FAO

These materials will make available clear information regarding admissions principles and procedures and entry criteria for each course.

The University will make all reasonable endeavours to ensure that publicity is accurate at the time of publication and delivered at a point considered most appropriate for the research purposes of prospective students

It is the responsibility of Marketing and Admissions Services and Recruitment, International and Outreach Office to ensure that general statements of policy in respect of admission are contained within publications produced by MAC. Admissions Officers and staff in Faculty Admissions Offices are similarly obliged to ensure that detail regarding course entry requirements, content, structure, delivery, accreditation and any other specific information relevant to the admissions process are included in all such publications produced by FAO.

4. Equal Opportunities

The University operates an equal opportunities policy which is binding upon all admissions staff and processes. No applicant will be treated less favourably on ground of age, sex, marital status, race, colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, political or religious belief, or any other criterion accepted as irrelevant by the Council. A full statement may be found in University Calendar[3]. The University does not operate a system of quotas for students drawn from certain backgrounds.

[3] UEA Calendar: Equal Opportunities For Students (4)

Where an applicant indicates that they have a disability their application should be dealt with in accordance with guidance provided by the Dean of Students Office (See Appendix 2).

Admissions Officers and Faculty Admissions Managers are responsible for ensuring that admissions criteria and procedures enable applicants from all educational backgrounds to demonstrate their academic potential and their ability to meet professional body requirements where relevant. Marketing and Admissions Services has a responsibility to monitor applications and admissions from certain categories of student, with findings reported to the Recruitment and Marketing Committee.

5. Confidentiality & Disclosure

Subject to any legal requirements relating to the Data Protection Act 1998 and disclosure, an application and any related documentation (e.g. references) will be treated as confidential to those members of the University's staff responsible for dealing with that application, and, in the Faculty of Health, to those external clinicians who are involved in the selection process.

Should an applicant eventually register, his/her application form and related documentation will be included in his/her personal record maintained, in confidence, by the Faculty, School or unit concerned.

Where an applicant does not become a registered student of the University, and unless he/she seeks deferred entry, his/her application will be retained in confidential storage for no less than 1 year and no more than 3 years before it is destroyed by shredding.

Applicants have a right under the Data Protection Act to see information held about them by the University; therefore application forms and associated papers, including interview notes, must be kept relevant, up to date and accessible. The University does not currently agree that applicants have a right to view references written about them in confidence.

6. Record Keeping

6.1 Corporate Information Systems

Admissions staff are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date records on the University's corporate information systems that relate to admissions (currently SITS), and for maintaining similarly robust systems locally where a corporate system is not in place. Exceptions to these arrangements for a specific course or courses must be approved by the University's RAM Committee.

6.2 Documentary Records

A confidential documentary record should be maintained of:

(a) Additional information regarded as pertinent to consideration of an application
(b) Any interview conducted for selection purposes
(c) The basis of any decisions (including rejection) or other significant transactions

This is of particular importance where non-academic factors are involved.

7. Statistics

Marketing and Admissions Services undertake statistical monitoring of applications and applications processing on behalf of the University. Faculties are also expected to monitor year on year data in respect of courses for which they are responsible in order to be able to respond appropriately in terms of planning and admissions policies.

The University recognises the value of time series of at least 5 years for the purposes of analysis and data projection.

8. Fundamental Requirements For An Offer Of A Place Of Study

8.1 Matriculation

Candidates may be admitted to a course only if they satisfy both minimum general entry requirements and course specific entry requirements. General and specific matriculation requirements are set out in the University Calendar[4]. Several specific policies exist in respect of matriculation:

(a) APL/APEL

Admission to the University may be gained by accreditation of prior learning (APL), a system whereby credits may be awarded for previous learning that has taken place either through formal study (accreditation of prior certificated learning – APCL) or in other ways (accreditation of prior experiential learning – APEL)[5].

(b) Admission Of Minors

All applicants for a place of study who will be legally classed a minor at the point of registration (ie less than 18 as at 1 October) should be referred to the Dean of Students who will apply specific procedures in order to address that students circumstances (See Appendix 3).

(c) Matriculation Requirements Waived By Concession

In certain cases it may be possible for a student who does not meet specific elements of the University's general entry requirement to gain admission. Where Faculty Admissions Offices wish to make an offer on academic grounds to an applicant in this situation, they should first refer to the Admissions Officer and Head of the relevant School who may support a concession in accordance with regulations set out in the University Calendar[6].

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[4] UEA Calendar: Admission Requirements for Undergraduate Courses and UEA Calendar: Admissions Requirements for Postgraduate Taught Courses
[5] UEA Calendar: APL / APEL Policy
[6] UEA Calendar: Admission Requirements for Undergraduate Courses

(d) Near Relatives

All applicants for a place of study who have a declared family relationship with a member of University staff should be referred to the Admissions Manager in Marketing and Admissions Services who will apply specific procedures in order to address that student's circumstances (See Appendix 4).

(e) Submission of Information

In providing information to the University prospective students are required to make submissions which are full, unambiguous and honest, and any offer made by the University is made in good faith. Where inaccurate information has been dishonestly provided to the University or where wilful misrepresentation or omission has occurred, a student may be precluded from admission to the University[7].

8.2 Applicant's capacity to successfully complete a course

The University will only make offers to applicants who demonstrate that they are academically equipped to successfully complete their proposed course of study. Faculties, Schools or Units may therefore set out minimum entry requirements for a course or courses.

8.3 Financial requirements

The University may seek evidence that an offer holder has access to appropriate levels of financial support in order to complete their studies. The University may also seek to secure a deposit against a place of study where take up is known to be volatile and there is a significant level of risk to the University.

8.4 Criminal Convictions

(a) General Procedure

All application forms used by the University should ask students to declare unspent criminal convictions (in the case of applications via UCAS and GTTR those agencies ask for relevant declarations). Where Faculty Admissions Offices wish to make an offer on academic grounds to an applicant (wherever domiciled) who has declared unspent criminal convictions, they should first refer the application to Marketing and Admissions Services who will start the relevant procedure and will respond within a reasonable time frame.

(b) Procedure For Courses Requiring CRB Checks

Some courses are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and those offered a place of study when asked, must declare any criminal convictions or cautions they may have, and will be required to secure a satisfactory disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Such disclosure is usually sought because the relevant professional body requires it but in some cases the University and/or the organisation with which it arranges placements may have identified a potential level of exposure to children or vulnerable adults which makes such a check appropriate. In such cases

[7] UEA Calendar: General Regulations for Students

where Faculty Admissions Offices wish to make an offer on academic grounds to an applicant it must be clear that this is subject to a satisfactory disclosure.

In either case applications should be dealt with in accordance with guidance provided by Marketing and Admissions Services (See Appendix 5).

9. Criteria To Be Employed In Considering An Application

9.1 Sources of Information

The University assesses each application on its individual merits, and will use a range of information in order to reach its decision. The University will consider applications on the basis of the application form and any other supplementary information requested, and will take into account past and future achievement in examinations, academic interest in the subject for which applicants have applied, personal interest and extra-curricular activities, confidential reference(s) and relevant professional experience.

Should the University require attendance at interview, an audition, the submission of further written work, presentation of portfolio or the completion of a test, candidates will be advised in advance.

9.2 Academic Achievement and Potential

Our **primary criterion** is our assessment of a candidate's academic achievements to date, and potential for the future. Necessarily, the nature, content and mode of delivery of the course of study for which the candidate has applied will influence the weighting we give to particular academic aptitudes and achievements in this assessment.

We consider it both necessary and appropriate to take the personal and educational circumstances and history of each applicant into account when making this assessment; Faculty Admissions Offices will be sensitive to the opportunities a student may have had to achieve and any obstacles that may have affected academic progress and consider such mitigating circumstances accordingly.

9.3 Non-Academic Achievement and Potential

Faculty Admissions Offices also employ, as a subordinate and **secondary criterion**, their assessment of the candidate's non-academic achievements and potential, where these relate to the candidate's potential to contribute to, and benefit from, the University as a diverse learning and social community. Such achievements and potential may be demonstrated through personal initiative, and sporting, artistic, voluntary and employment endeavours.

9.4 Competitive Factors

The process of consideration of applications for entry to courses at the University of East Anglia necessarily reflects the popularity of many of our courses. For many courses the University receives substantially more applications than the number of places available. In such circumstances our selection processes and criteria are oriented towards providing opportunities for the candidates who we judge will secure

the greatest academic benefit from completing the course and who, in turn, will make the most positive contribution to the academic community of the University.

9.5 Timing Of Applications

All applications received by stated deadlines will receive equal academic consideration. However, Associate Deans and Admissions Officers are under a duty to achieve to a target intake specified by the University (failure to do so can impair the quality of the learning experience). The number of applicants to any course cannot be estimated precisely and can occasionally exceed expectations (or the reverse). In such circumstances (i.e. in order to prevent either over-recruitment or under-recruitment) action may be taken to either limit or enhance the number of candidates that eventually qualify for entry (for example via UCAS Extra or Clearing). The terms of conditional offers made in respect of applications that are received after any published deadline may thus vary from those made to applicants whose application was received earlier.

10. Interviews

Where interviews are an integral part of the selection process offers will not be made unless candidates attend. Where a selection interview is not required the University may nonetheless invite candidates to visit the University to provide an opportunity to discuss their application further and to meet staff from the Faculty and Schools of Study.

10.1 'Selection' Interviews

Selection interviews are held for the purpose of determining whether or not an offer of admission is to be made to the applicant and/or the terms of any conditional offer to be made. The opportunity may be taken to provide applicants with further information about the course of study and the University. Applicants will be advised of the date and expected arrival time at the University, duration and whether any written test or submission of work will be required during the interview

(a) Interviewers And Interviewer Training

Selection interviews will be conducted by a member of staff who has received appropriate training in selection interviewing. Training should ensure competence, consistency of approach and fairness.

(b) Structuring Selection Interviews

In the interests of equity, all selection interviews for a particular course should be structured in a consistent manner, following an agreed format. It is recognised that 'follow up' discussions may necessarily vary from interview to interview.

(c) Recording Selection Interviews

An interview report form should be drafted in respect of each selection interview recording a suitable transcript/commentary and a final recommendation. Where significant numbers of selection interviews are conducted a 'matrix sheet' for record keeping may be of use.

(d) Telephone Interviews

When 'Selection' interviews are necessary by telephone the interviewer has a responsibility to identify the candidate using personal data from the application form.

11. Decisions and Offers

11.1 Authority To Make Decisions

The authority to make a decision on an application is limited to those indicated in Section 2 of this code of practice

11.2 Time Limit For Considering Applications

Unless a candidate is to be invited to attend a selection interview (see Section 10), the University will aim to respond to all applications no more than 3 working days after receipt of the completed application (including any required ancillary material such as material required for a special assessment, transcripts, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance).

Where a candidate is invited to attend for a selection interview (see Section 10), at interview they will be informed of the time frame of when they will hear about a decision.

11.3 Offers Conditional On Academic Results

(a) 'Typical' Offers

The University indicates 'typical' offers in its prospectus. These reflect the conditional offer made to a typical applicant after full consideration of their application. 'Typical' offers are not, therefore the 'default' or 'standard' offer and are not made in substitution for a full and thorough consideration of an application.

(b) Matriculation

The terms of any conditional offer must ensure that the applicant will have fulfilled the University's matriculation requirements on entry or have been granted an appropriate concession.

11.4 Non-Academic Pre-Requisites For Admission

(a) Occupational Health Checks & Criminal Records Bureau Clearance

Entrance to particular courses may require a satisfactory health check or Criminal Records Bureau clearance. Where such a check may be required this should be stated in the relevant course entry in the appropriate prospectus.

(b) Financial Declarations

The University may require self-funding offer holders to provide evidence, in the form of a standardised financial declaration, that they understand the costs associated with the course of study and will have appropriate resources available to them to meet the costs of their studies.

11.5 Academically Unconditional Offers

An academically unconditional offer of admission implies that the University is satisfied that the applicant has met all academic requirements for admission. If such an offer is made, the University will make it clear if there are non-academic requirements (e.g. the satisfactory provision of a financial declaration, deposit or Criminal Records Bureau clearance) that remain to be fulfilled and by when.

11.6 Fully Unconditional Offers

A fully unconditional offer of admission implies that the University is satisfied that the applicant has met all the requirements for admission, both academic and non-academic (including financial). Where such an offer is made, the University will make it clear that this is the case.

11.7 Communicating Offers To Applicants

All offer letters will set out the terms of an offer clearly, unambiguously, and will set out what the procedure is for responding to that offer unless such guidance is already provided by an agency such as UCAS or GTTR.

11.8 Offers Outside UCAS: Time Limits For Acceptance

(a) Where an offer is made that specifies a deadline by which a response is to be received, the deadline will provide reasonable time for the applicant to reply.

(b) Where no deadline is specified, offers should indicate that the offer is for admission on a specific date of registration (normally at the beginning of a specific academic year) and will lapse if the student has not registered by that date.

11.9 Rejection

Before issuing a rejection Faculty Admissions Offices should consider whether the applicant might be offered a place on a suitable alternative course. Where a candidate's application is unsuccessful, communication with the candidate should be prompt, courteous and explicit.

11.10 Recording Decisions

It is the responsibility of Faculty Admissions Staff to ensure that an adequate and appropriate record is kept of the grounds on which any decision is based. The records should be kept in a manner which is consistent and fair. This is particularly important where a range of Faculty Admissions Offices are responsible for considering applications to a course.

The recording is the responsibility of Admissions Officers and Faculty Admissions Offices and should be made with reference to the criteria set out above. Where significant numbers of applications are received a 'matrix sheet' for record keeping may be of use.

12. Provision of Feedback

12.1 The University recognises that provision of constructive feedback is an element of good customer care and will provide such feedback to applicants who have been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place of study on request from that applicant. Feedback on specific applications will not be offered to other parties (eg parents or teachers) without the express consent of the applicant.

12.2 Requests for feedback must be made by the applicant in writing within three months of the date that the application was unsuccessful. Faculty Admissions Offices must in return provide feedback in writing within 15 working days of receipt of a request for feedback, or inform applicants when feedback will be provided.

12.3 Feedback will be made in the form of a standard set of text which indicates into which rejection category the applicant was placed. Additional comments about specific cases may be included, which may take the form of advice as to how to improve any future applications.

12.4 The University will not normally offer further feedback but it is at the discretion of the Admissions Officer to decide whether to enter into further correspondence after the provision of initial feedback or to review a decision. Any decision to overturn a rejection must be made in the context of the admissions criteria applied to all other applications to that course of study.

13. Changes Made To Courses Of Study After The Point Of Offer

13.1 Where a significant change has been made to the name, content or structure of a course for which an applicant has been made the offer of a place, the Faculty Admissions Office shall write to that applicant outlining the changes and providing advice as appropriate. This may include advice concerning possible alternatives if the student does not wish to apply for the original course.

14. Offers and Guaranteed Accommodation in University Residences

The University's offer of a place on full-time undergraduate courses, and to international students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, carries with it a guarantee of a place in University residences (except where the student is normally resident close to the University) provided that an application for a residences place is submitted, offers of a place of study have been firmly accepted and, in the case of International postgraduate taught students, a deposit is submitted – all by the stated deadlines. Full details of Accommodation Guarantees may be obtained from the University's Accommodation Office.

Offers of admission to students in these categories may not be made outside the terms of this guarantee (e.g. 'without accommodation') without the authority of the Director of Admissions.

15. Summer Admissions Season (including UCAS Confirmation and Clearing)

A member(s) of admissions staff with appropriate authority and experience to make decisions on behalf of the course regarding undergraduate and postgraduate admissions shall be appointed to be in attendance at the University throughout the confirmation and clearing period i.e. July (PGCE) and August (UCAS) until at least the beginning of September.

Where the University is in a position to consider applications to a course through the UCAS clearing scheme the criteria to be employed in considering any application will be those set out in Section 9 above.

16. Enquiries, Review And Appeals

16.1 Limits of disclosure concerning individual applications

Admissions staff should be able to explain in broad terms how a decision on an application was made and convey this information simply and clearly to those applicants who wish to receive feedback**.**

16.2 Review

It is not uncommon for applicants or their representatives (eg tutor) to submit additional information in support of an application. Admissions staff should consider whether they will take into account such information (which may be medical, personal or academic) when making a decision, and indeed whether they will be prepared to amend a decision in the light of such information.

16.3 Appeals

The University does not operate an appeals process. If an applicant is unhappy with the decision that has been made on their application, then they may activate the complaints procedure.

17. Complaints

17.1 Complaints procedure

It is assumed that where difficulties are encountered by applicants to the University these can be quickly resolved by direct communication with the relevant Faculty Admissions Office concerned. However, applicants rejected by the University can challenge an admissions decision if they have reason to believe that the decision was subject to procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias, or that extenuating circumstances should be, and have not already been, taken into account. Such complaints should be referred to Marketing and Admissions Services in order to activate the relevant procedure. (See Appendix 7)

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Taught Admissions Code of Practice

18. Appendices

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Marketing and Admissions Services
September 2009

QAA

Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education

Section 10: Admissions to higher education - September 2006

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Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Admissions to higher education

Foreword

1 This document is the second edition of a code of practice for admissions to higher education in UK higher education institutions. It is one of a suite of interrelated documents which forms an overall *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*) for the guidance of organisations subscribing to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and other bodies offering UK higher education.

2 The overall *Code of practice* and its 10 constituent sections were originally prepared by QAA between 1998 and 2001 in response to the Reports of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education and its Scottish Committee (the *Dearing* and *Garrick Reports*). The *Code of practice* supports the national arrangements within the UK for quality assurance in higher education. It identifies a comprehensive series of system-wide principles (precepts) covering matters relating to the management of academic quality and standards in higher education. It provides an authoritative reference point for institutions as they consciously, actively and systematically assure the academic quality and standards of their programmes, awards and qualifications.

3 The *Code of practice* assumes that, taking into account principles and practices agreed UK-wide, each institution has its own systems for independent verification both of its quality and standards and of the effectiveness of its quality assurance systems. In developing the *Code of practice*, extensive advice has been sought from a range of knowledgeable practitioners.

4 The *Code of practice* does not incorporate statutory requirements relating to relevant legislation, for example the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001*. It assumes that institutions

have an overriding obligation in all such cases to ensure that they meet the requirements of legislation. However, where a section of the *Code of practice* is related to legislative or similar obligations, efforts have been made to ensure compatibility between them.

5 Since 2001 a number of developments in UK higher education have encouraged QAA to begin a revision of individual sections of the *Code of practice*. In undertaking this task QAA has also decided to review the structure of the sections and, in particular, to replace the original 'precepts and guidance' format with a 'precepts and explanation' approach, using the explanations to make clear why the precepts are considered important and reducing opportunities for a 'checklist' approach to the *Code of practice*. In doing so QAA has sought to meet Recommendation 4 (part 4) of the Better Regulation Task Force in its report *Higher Education: Easing the Burden*, July 2002. This revised section has also taken account of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.

6 Revised sections of the *Code of practice* are therefore now structured into a series of precepts and accompanying explanations. The precepts express key matters of principle that the higher education community has identified as important for the assurance of quality and academic standards. Individual institutions should be able to demonstrate they are addressing the matters tackled by the precepts effectively, through their own management and organisational processes, taking account of institutional needs, traditions, culture and decision-making. The accompanying explanations show why the precepts are important.

7 The *Code of practice* is a statement of good practice that has been endorsed by the higher education community. As such it is useful in QAA's audit and review processes that consider the extent to which an institution, in developing and implementing its own policies, has taken account of the *Code of practice* and its precepts.

8 Institutions may find the explanations useful for developing their own policy and for allowing some flexibility of practice at subject level, depending on local needs. It is important to emphasise that the explanations do not form part of QAA's expectations of institutional practice when QAA teams are conducting audits and reviews.

9 Academic staff in departments and schools do not necessarily need to be aware of the detail of all of the various sections of the *Code of practice*, although they might well be expected to be familiar with the institutional policies it informs and any parts which are particularly relevant to their own responsibilities.

10 To assist users, the precepts are listed, without the accompanying explanations, in Appendix 1 to this section of the *Code of practice*.

11 The first version of this section of the *Code of practice* was published in September 2001. The publication of this second version follows consultation with staff in institutions, who have helped to update the *Code of practice* to take account of institutions' practical experience of using the guidance contained in its predecessor.

Introduction

12 The *Code of practice, Section 10: Admissions to higher education* is intended to help institutions to assure themselves and others that the policies and procedures they use to attract, recruit, select, admit and enroll students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.

13 The admission of students to higher education is a complex process of interrelated activities. These activities typically include the:

- promotion and marketing of courses to prospective students, their parents, employers and advisers
- identification and recruitment of prospective students to an institution and specific programmes of study through, for example, open days; recruitment fairs; taster days; and summer schools
- selection of applicants suitable for a particular programme
- offer of a place on a programme of study
- enrolment of students onto a programme of study
- induction and orientation of new students to the institution, department, school or faculty and programme of study.

14 For the purpose of this document, 'admissions to higher education' is used as a generic term to encapsulate all activities, policies, procedures and practices involved in the process of admitting students to higher education. The *Code of practice* is applicable to all admissions to higher education institutions, including undergraduate, postgraduate, UK and international applicants from both within and outside the European Union (EU).

15 The context in which admissions to higher education take place changes over time and differs at any one time between institutions and across subject areas; it is influenced by the supply of, and the demand for, places. However, the *Code of practice* is based on broad principles that should apply to all circumstances and market

conditions in which applicants are recruited and selected. It does not specify the criteria to be used for selection but it encourages each institution to ensure that its own policies and procedures are operated consistently and effectively.

16 The broad principles are set out in the precepts of the *Code of practice*. The explanatory text, which supports the precepts, illustrates the actions an institution may consider taking in order to assure itself that it is operating within the expectations set out in the precepts. Some aspects of the guidance are likely to be of particular relevance to applications for particular programmes, while other aspects of the guidance might be relevant to a particular application, according to when and how that application is received and considered.

17 Applicants to a higher education system that caters for mass participation will come from a wide range of backgrounds, and will demonstrate their potential to succeed in a variety of ways. Admissions policies need to address the making of quite complex judgements about relative potential within a diverse population of applicants. Each institution will wish to set and implement admissions policies that are consistent with its particular mission and that are fair, lawful and have regard to the reasonable expectations prospective students have of the admissions process.

18 Policies and practices for student admissions should be designed to secure a good match between the abilities and aptitudes of the applicant and the demands of the programme, thus leading to the selection of students who can reasonably be expected to complete their studies successfully. Those making admissions decisions need to discriminate between applicants, to determine who should be selected. This requires an exercise of judgement; it is important that this is underpinned by reference to transparent and justifiable criteria.

19 Admissions policies typically address how complex judgements should be made, especially when applicants with a variety of capabilities come from a diversity of backgrounds. The *Code of*

practice encourages institutions to be explicit about the reasons behind the principles and practices attached to their admissions policies and the benefits resulting from their implementation. Finally, the *Code of practice* recognises as good practice regular monitoring and review of recruitment, admissions, and enrolment policies and procedures, as well as the development of appropriate institutional means of ensuring that all those involved in admissions are competent to undertake their roles.

20 Across the wide spectrum of applications that comprise a substantial part of higher education institutions' admissions work, the policies and procedures relating to them are developed and assured solely by each institution. Within this, the *Code of practice* addresses the fact that in admissions to some programmes, regulation of the admissions process is influenced by the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), or sponsoring bodies, as well as by higher education institutions themselves. The *Code of practice* also recognises that many higher education institutions will make use of admissions schemes such as the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which has its own procedures and rules, agreed by its members. Institutions are, of course, also expected to conform to the requirements of relevant legislation such as that covering human rights, data protection, race relations, age discrimination and equality of opportunity. Each institution will wish to incorporate relevant aspects of such schemes, requirements and legislation to set and implement policies that are built on fair and transparent practice.

21 Users of the *Code of practice* are also recommended to refer to other sections, in particular *Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes* (September 2004); *Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)* (September 2004); *Section 3: Students with disabilities* (October 1999); *Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters* (March 2000); and to QAA's *Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning* (September 2004).

Precepts and explanations

General principles

1
Institutions have policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students to higher education that are fair, clear and explicit and are implemented consistently.

Institutions' policies and procedures that reflect the admissions process in its entirety for all categories of student, including full and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate study, will help to demonstrate that policies and procedures are fair and can be implemented consistently. Policies and procedures that provide clear and explicit information about how applications from prospective UK and international students, from both within and outside the EU, are appropriately accommodated in the recruitment and admission process will also help an institution to assure itself that its policies are being implemented consistently.

Clearly articulating where within the institution the responsibility lies for each part of the admissions process will help institutions to be fair and consistent in the implementation of its policies. For example, which body has responsibility and authority for determining the number of offers to be made relative to the number of places available, the setting of criteria against which applicants will be considered, and the selection of applicants themselves. Institutions may also wish to consider including in their policies and procedures information about the responsibilities and obligations of applicants and students within the admissions process. This may include how an institution will respond to applications that include fraudulent or false information.

Institutions will wish to consider how the diverse background, experience and age of applicants and different modes of study available can be appropriately reflected in its policies and procedures. In devising their policies and procedures institutions will wish to provide for equality of opportunity for all applicants within the selection criteria established for each programme.

Ensuring that all procedures and policies can be effectively implemented in relation to study undertaken in collaboration with other providers and operate in particular circumstances, such as Clearing, will help an institution to demonstrate that their procedures and policies are fair, clear, explicit and are implemented consistently.

Once policies and procedures have been established, institutions will want to consider which elements might best and most informatively be presented to applicants, their advisers and agents.

2
Institutions' decisions regarding admissions to higher education are made by those equipped to make the required judgements and competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

All staff involved at each stage of the admissions process, including those of partner organisations, external advisers and agents, need to be informed about the institution's policies, procedures and criteria for student admissions to higher education. All staff associated with student admissions will benefit from having clearly and explicitly defined roles. Staff will need to be aware of which stage(s) in the admissions process they might contribute to. Full details of all roles and responsibilities should be available to all associated staff.

Higher education institutions should ensure that all staff at all levels of the admissions process, including those of partner organisations, are adequately informed, appropriately trained and supported to undertake their role(s).

Institutions should consider the level and mixture of staff expertise required to develop, implement, monitor and revise the institution's admissions policies and procedures. Applicants, stakeholders and the institution will wish to be reassured that those staff required to make judgements about student admissions have the appropriate skills to participate in the selection of prospective students, including undertaking interviews, auditions or assessment of an applicant's practical/vocational skills.

This may be assisted by ensuring that all staff involved in the admissions process, and particularly those involved in making selection and recruitment decisions, have an understanding of the potential for bias that can arise from educational and cultural differences. Appropriate arrangements should also be made for updating staff knowledge and understanding of the differing routes into higher education and consideration given to how staff may best engage in the regular sharing of good practice in admissions, locally and nationally. This may necessitate considering how staff may take advantage of opportunities for contact with schools, further education institutions, workplace training providers and career advisers.

Recruitment and selection

3
Institutions' promotional materials and activities are accurate, relevant, current, accessible and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.

Applicants to higher education will benefit from having access to various types of information at different times during the admissions process. Institutions offer a range of materials and activities designed to assist potential applicants in making informed decisions about their options. Institutions will wish to consider the format most appropriate to the full range of potential applicants, when and how information on a range of matters is made available. For example, programme specifications and entry profiles, including those provided through UCAS, or comparable information, such as postgraduate directories, can provide useful information for prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students, respectively. It may be useful for institutions to consider how the various sources of information are made known to prospective students, which information should be issued routinely and at which stage of the admissions process, and which should be made publicly available or only on request.

Information about the range, content, structure, organisation and the main learning and teaching methods which are employed in each programme can help prospective students to select the most appropriate programme, mode of study and route or pathway to their strengths and interests. The extent of flexibility and choice within the curriculum design and the assessment procedures adopted within individual programmes, including any opportunities for credit transfer and/or the accreditation of prior learning, if it is made clear and readily available, can assist prospective students to make informed decisions about their options.

Institutions and PSRBs will wish to make it clear to prospective students which programmes are accredited and/or approved by a PSRB. Prospective students will also find it helpful for institutions' promotional material and activities to include information about any particular requirements on application, for example, the enhanced disclosure of medical or criminal records. Providing prospective students with information about what levels of access to membership of the PSRB are provided on successful completion of the programme can also help students to plan for their future career and study options.

Prospective students will appreciate being informed about the range of welfare, guidance and support services (pastoral and academic) that are available for all students and services that are available for those with particular needs. Institutions may wish to consider how and when information about accessing these services is provided to applicants and prospective students.

In addition to full and accurate information about all fees and associated costs of studying a particular programme, prospective students may find it helpful for institutions to include information on the availability of institutional specific advice and sources of financial support.

Institutions will also want to consider carefully how any special application and support arrangements for any specific category of applicant, be they from the UK, elsewhere in the EU or from outside

the EU, are reflected in their policies and procedures and how these are communicated to prospective students their advisers and agents.

In order to assist prospective students in making informed choices and decisions, institutions may wish to consider how information about opportunities to gather further information about a programme, visit the institution or gain experience of higher education are provided. Information about, for example, any institution, department, faculty or school open days, summer schools or other opportunities for prospective students to meet current students and staff, can raise awareness about the opportunities to ask questions and gain clarification about a specific issue of particular interest to an individual applicant.

4
Institutions' selection policies and procedures are clear and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously. Transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgements made during the selection process for entry.

A range of evidence may be considered when judgements are made about the potential of an applicant to succeed on a particular programme. Institutions may wish to consider the abilities, aptitudes, skills, qualifications, other prior learning and experiences, including that achieved in the workplace, of prospective students that would indicate their merit and potential to succeed on each programme. Careful consideration of the reliability, relevance and validity of the methods used to gather evidence about an applicants merit and potential to succeed, will help institutions to assure themselves that their selection policies and procedures are fair and implemented consistently.

In developing their selection policies and procedures, institutions should be clear and open about the reliance placed on, and relative contribution of, prior academic achievement (demonstrated for example by examination results and qualifications), the results of

additional testing or assessment (including the purpose, conduct and outcome of interviews, auditions and assessment of skill), and potential and relevant capabilities demonstrated by other means.

In assessing merit and potential to succeed, or in discriminating between candidates with broadly equivalent educational achievement, institutions give careful consideration to the different ways by which the desired characteristics might be demonstrated, for example, personal initiative or teamworking ability. Such evidence often comes from involvement in sporting, artistic or voluntary activities, or from employment. In making such judgements, institutions need to be sensitive to the extent to which applicants have had opportunities to participate in such activities, and to acknowledge that, in a culturally diverse society, there are many ways in which such characteristics might be demonstrated. It is also useful to remember that opportunities to participate in such activities can be limited by a range of factors such as disability and social background.

Institutions should consider how factors determining entry and selection are agreed and monitored across the institution to ensure they are in line with the institution's mission. Similarly, once they are included in institution policy, consideration should be given to how these factors are communicated to applicants and all who contribute to the selection decision.

The specific procedures to be followed, where additional criteria need to be considered in the selection process, such as those relating to medical and criminal records, as required by some PSRBs, should be clear to all who contribute to the selection decision. The purpose, use and contribution of this information to the selection decision should be clearly communicated to applicants.

When developing their policies and procedures for the selection of applicants, institutions should give consideration to how decisions and the reasons for those decisions are recorded and the approach to be followed in any communication to applicants about the reasons.

5
Institutions conduct their admissions processes efficiently, effectively and courteously according to fully documented operational procedures that are readily accessible to all those involved in the admissions process, both within and without the institution, applicants and their advisers.

Institutions may find it helpful to identify, in their operational procedures, each stage of the admissions process, from initial receipt of an application, through decision processing, to final registration of a successful applicant as a student. The identification of responsibilities and authority for the conduct of the various elements of the admissions process will be important to the efficient and effective implementation of the procedures.

Institutions may receive applications from a range of sources, including those submitted via admissions schemes such as UCAS. When determining the procedures for handling received applications, it may be useful for institutions to consider the appropriate timescales for processing an application; this may also usefully include setting time limits on keeping information about applicants.

Institutions will want to give careful consideration in their admissions procedures to whether and how statements confirming that information about applicants remains confidential between designated parties, and to the inclusion of a declaration, signed by applicants, authorising the release of information to these designated parties[1]. Establishing procedures for responding to enquiries from other parties for information about an application can help to improve the consistency of operating the institutions procedures and enhance confidence in the process.

[1] Institutions might find it helpful to consider the assurances given to applicants by UCAS; see Appendix 2.

Information to applicants

6
Institutions inform applicants of the obligations placed on prospective students at the time the offer of a place is made.

It is in both the institution's and prospective students' interests for applicants to be informed fully about the procedures, both the institution's and any admissions scheme's, they should follow if they wish to take up the offer of a place, or if they do not wish to take up an offer. Applicants will also find it helpful to be provided with clear information about the action they should take if they do not achieve the results and/or meet the criteria specified in the offer of a place.

Applicants are required to make important choices and decisions during the admissions process. To assist applicants in making informed and timely decisions, institutions are encouraged to consider the extent, format and timing of information and guidance it makes available to applicants, once an offer of a place has been made. Such information may include, for example, institutions' regulations to which students are subject. For postgraduate students particularly, this may also include clarification of the rights to intellectual property developed while a student of the institution.

Applicants may request a deferral of entry to a later year, and the procedures for making this request should be clear and readily available. The subsequent process to be followed by the institution in considering this request should also be clear. The decision to grant or decline a request for deferred entry to a later year should, similar to the decisions made about the initial selection of applicants, be based on transparent criteria.

7
Institutions inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place is made and registration is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances.

Occasionally, institutions find it necessary to make changes to a programme between the time the offer of a place on that programme is made and the registration of students is complete. Under such circumstances, institutions should ensure that they inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of the changes. Institutions will wish to take all reasonable and necessary steps to support the applicant and ensure that they advise prospective students of proposed amendments and arrangements and/or alternative options available.

Typically, alterations are due to staff changes that may result in significant amendment to the content of a programme, such as the withdrawal of modules or significant alterations to the teaching, learning or assessment arrangements for the programme. Other significant changes may include alterations to the status of a programme, including, for example, the withdrawal or granting of validation by a PSRB or the failure of an advertised programme to gain approval or accreditation; the cost or location of the programme; and the suspension or discontinuation of the programme.

Institutions may also find it helpful to refer to section 7 of the UCAS *Admissions Guide* which provides advice on informing students of changes to a programme and covers the UCAS procedures to be followed if an institution is either unable to offer a course or is introducing a new course during the admissions cycle.

8
Institutions explain to applicants who have accepted a place arrangements for the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote efficient and effective integration of entrants fully as students.

All new entrants will require coordinated and consistent information related to the institution and the department, unit or faculty with which they will be studying; learning support services available, including details of information technology and library services; study skills; personal tutorial support; and student welfare and personal development planning.

The diverse needs of any particular student group, which might typically include students with disabilities, international students, those whose first language is not English, mature students and full-time, part-time and work-based students, will need to be accommodated in arrangements for the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new students. Institutions in Wales may also wish to consider QAA's *Guidelines for higher education institutions in Wales for effective practice in examining and assessing in a language other than the language of tuition* (September 2003).

Additionally, it would be helpful to students who may have particular needs for learning support, for example, those who have been away from study for a period and those who may have a need to enhance specific skills, to have these needs identified at an early stage so that the necessary support can be provided.

Institutions will need to consider at what stage in the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new entrants the various information needs of new students can be most effectively met. In addition to determining the structure, content and presentation of information, institutions will need to consider arrangements for the integration of new entrants and whether this is best achieved, for example, through the provision of formal induction programmes by the institution, individual departments or a combination of methods.

9
Institutions consider the most effective and efficient arrangements for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.

Institutions will want to give careful consideration to how they inform prospective students that their application has been unsuccessful. Institutions will also wish to consider the nature and extent of feedback available to unsuccessful applicants.

How feedback is provided to unsuccessful applicants, for example, whether it is provided routinely or on request only, should be made clear to applicants as early as possible in the admissions process. Prospective students and applicants will need to be made aware of any time limits within which they may make a request for feedback on an unsuccessful application, and the procedures to follow if they are able to provide any additional information pertinent to the application.

In order to provide effective feedback to unsuccessful applicants, institutions may find it helpful to consider how they record the decision-making process and reasons for selecting or not selecting a candidate. Institutions may also wish to consider to what extent they are able to offer advice to unsuccessful applicants about alternatives and future options for study.

Complaints and appeals

10
Institutions have policies and procedures in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of their admissions process and ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the policies and procedures.

In considering their complaints handling policies, institutions may wish to determine in the first instance whether, and if so how, their general complaints policies and procedures can be applied to complaints made about the admissions process.

Policies and procedures concerned with complaints about admissions processes should be appropriate and fair. Information provided by applicants and staff involved in admissions may assist institutions in identifying whether or not revisions to their existing policies may be required.

Institutions should consider how and at what stage in the admissions process they inform applicants about their complaints policies and procedures and how they record and monitor the receipt and outcome of complaints.

11
Institutions have policies in place for responding to applicants' appeals against the outcome of a selection decision that make clear to all staff and applicants whether, and if so, on what grounds, any such appeals may be considered.

In considering their policies for responding to appeals made by applicants, institutions may wish to determine in the first instance whether, and if so how, their existing appeals policies and procedures can be applied to appeals against the outcome of a selection decisions.

The appropriateness of appeals policies and procedures to applicants compared to enrolled students may inform institutions about whether existing appeals procedures are considered appropriate, whether revisions are required to accommodate responses to appeals against the outcome of a selection decision or whether the development of policies and procedures specific to appeals about the outcome of selection decisions are required.

Institutions should consider how and at what stage in the admissions process they inform applicants whether appeals against the outcome of a selection/admissions decision will be considered, the procedures, circumstances and criteria for making and considering any such appeal and how they record and monitor the receipt and outcome of appeals.

Institutions may find it helpful to explain to potential appellants the difference between a complaint about the administration of their

admissions policies and procedures and an appeal against the outcome of a selection/admission decision.

Institutions and potential appellants will find it helpful to have clear, explicit criteria for entry, clearly documented procedures for the application of these criteria, careful recording of decisions and the reasons for the decisions taken, and opportunities for applicants to receive feedback following an unsuccessful application.

For a fuller discussion on the distinction between complaints and appeals, refer to the *Code of practice, Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters*.

Monitoring and review of policies and procedures

12
Institutions regularly review their policies and procedures related to student admissions to higher education to ensure that they continue to support the mission and strategic objectives of the institution, and that they remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances.

Periodic reviews of admissions policies and procedures might consider the experience of operating policies, procedures and criteria in relation to the changing patterns in the applicant market; changes in the pattern of availability of, and demand for, different modes of study; and changes in the nature of the main qualifications offered by applicants.

The expectations of student achievement represented by qualification framework descriptors and subject benchmark statements, and legal rights and obligations relevant to the admissions process will also inform any revision to an institution's policies and procedures.

In addition, and where relevant, institutions may also wish to consider identifying and accounting for any differences in admissions procedures between subjects, departments and faculties.

Similarly, monitoring the application of admissions policies to programmes provided through franchise or other collaborative arrangements with other institutions will provide institutions with a wealth of comparative data that may be supported by monitoring the effectiveness of articulation or other arrangements that allow students to enter programmes with advanced standing.

By monitoring the use and relative effectiveness of recruitment materials and activities such as pre-entry information and guidance, attendance at summer schools, 'junior universities' and face-to-face pre-entry meetings, institutions will be better informed about their usefulness in attracting suitable applicants. Institutions may also find it useful to consider whether, and if so how, they may best take account of surveys of applicants, be they undertaken by the institution of its own applicants or externally by other organisations. The routine monitoring and review of student progression and retention rates, withdrawal and transfer, and reasons for non-completion can further provide institutions with a better understanding of the effectiveness of their overall admissions procedures.

Appendix 1

The precepts

(Note: the precepts are printed here without explanatory text for ease of reference.)

General principles

1
Institutions have policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students to higher education that are fair, clear and explicit and are implemented consistently.

2
Institutions' decisions regarding admissions to higher education are made by those equipped to make the required judgements and competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

Recruitment and selection

3
Institutions' promotional materials and activities are accurate, relevant, current, accessible and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.

4
Institutions' selection policies and procedures are clear and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously. Transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgements made during the selection process for entry.

5
Institutions conduct their admissions processes efficiently, effectively and courteously according to fully documented operational procedures that are readily accessible to all those involved in the admissions process, both within and without the institution, applicants and their advisers.

Information to applicants

6
Institutions inform applicants of the obligations placed on prospective students at the time the offer of a place is made.

7
Institutions inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place is made and registration is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances.

8
Institutions explain to applicants who have accepted a place arrangements for the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote efficient and effective integration of entrants fully as students.

9
Institutions consider the most effective and efficient arrangements for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.

Complaints and appeals

10
Institutions have policies and procedures in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of their admissions process and ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the policies and procedures.

11
Institutions have policies in place for responding to applicants' appeals against the outcome of a selection decision that make clear to all staff and applicants whether, and if so, on what grounds, any such appeals may be considered.

Monitoring and review of policies and procedures

12
Institutions regularly review their policies and procedures related to student admissions to higher education to ensure that they continue to support the mission and strategic objectives of the institution, and that they remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances.

Appendix 2

UCAS guidance on confidentiality

UCAS confirms that applications are normally confidential between:

i the applicant

ii the UCAS group of companies

iii the referee

iv the appropriate staff at the universities and colleges to which the applicant has applied

v the applicant's school, college or training organisation

vi the applicant's parents, where appropriate

vii the examination board or awarding body

viii the student support assessment body

ix the Student Loans Company, and

x in the case of international applicants, the British Council or appropriate agency.

However, UCAS tries to detect and prevent fraud, and has the right to give outside organisations, including the Police, the Home Office, local authorities, examination boards or awarding bodies, and the Department for Work and Pensions and its agencies, information from the applicant's form.

Appendix 3

Membership of the advisory group

Dr Jennifer Barnes	Director of Education Worldwide, BP plc (formerly Assistant Principal (Academic) & Dean of Studies, Trinity College of Music)
Janet Bohrer	Development Officer, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Chris Burdon	formerly Director, Academic Affairs, University of Keele
Steve Cannon	Secretary to the University, University of Aberdeen
Delyth Chambers	Director, Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation, The University of Manchester and Chair, Russell Group Admissions Officers Committee
Kath Dentith	Assistant Director, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
Ana Hidalgo-Kingston	Head of Admissions, University of Sheffield
Stephen Marshall	Academic Registrar, Oxford Brookes University
Anthony McClaran	Chief Executive, Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
Dr Claire Mera-Nelson	Head of Postgraduate Programmes & Research and Dean of Studies, Trinity College of Music, Trinity Laban

Jane Minto	Director, The Oxford Colleges Admissions Office, University of Oxford
Dr Jayne Mitchell	Assistant Director, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
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QAA 120 09/2006

The Registry
Admissions Office

Taught Admissions Code of Practice

Appendix 2: Admission of Students with a Disability

Objectives

The underlying objective of the University's admissions procedures is to facilitate the entry of those candidates who will engage with and contribute to the intellectual and cultural vitality of the institution. The objectives of the additional procedure supporting the admission of students with disabilities are:

- To identify those students who require "reasonable adjustments" to access the learning, residential and social opportunities offered by the University and to ensure that they are provided with any information and advice which would help them make an informed choice of programme and institution.

- To enable Dean of Students' Office staff to make contact with applicants and, where appropriate, Schools, to ensure that the necessary package of adjustments is clearly identified and put in place for the start of the programme.

- To ensure that there are no disability-related factors which would make it unlikely, despite the provision of "reasonable adjustments", that applicants could meet the learning outcomes of the particular programme(s) for which they have applied. In relation to health and other programmes which also lead to professional registration, this would include consideration of the impact of the disability on applicants' ability to meet the additional requirements of the relevant professional bodies.

- To identify non-trivial health and safety issues, particularly in relation to laboratory or fieldwork elements of a programme.

- To alert applicants to any actions they need to take before taking up their places including applications for funding for disability-related costs for which they may be eligible.

The procedure

Students are encouraged by UCAS and on all UEA applications forms to disclose their disabilities, although they have a legal right to choose not to do so.

When a student declares a disability, the first step of staff in the Faculty Admissions Office is to decide whether or not they wish to make an offer on academic grounds. If the decision is not to make an offer then the normal admissions processes continue without any action in relation to the disability. If the decision in principle is to make an offer, then the application is referred to the Disability Co-ordinator in the Dean of Students' Office for advice. Staff may expect an initial response within 3 working days of receipt of the application in the Dean of Students' Office (DOS).

Advice will be given on a case-by-case basis and should not normally prevent offers being made to students with disabilities within a similar time frame as applies to other applicants to the course. However, there is likely to be a small number of cases where, for reasons of disability and/or for the purpose of clarifying or adding to the information provided, some delay in the process may be

necessary. In such cases, admissions staff will be informed of the reason for the delay so that applicants may be kept informed; the Disability Co-ordinator will provide an appropriate form of words.

The Disability Co-ordinator or other appropriate member of DOS staff may wish to make contact or see applicants when they attend a Visit Day or arrange an individual visit to discuss academic, daily living and any other disability issues including funding. In some cases, this discussion will be for the purposes of identifying "reasonable adjustments" and helping students' prepare for a smooth transition to University life. In others it may be material to reaching a judgment about the applicant's capacity to meet the learning outcomes of the programme with "reasonable adjustments" or the requirements of a professional body, and will therefore need to take place before an offer is made.

Although such cases are extremely rare, it is possible that the Disability Co-ordinator may conclude that it is not possible to provide "reasonable adjustments" which would enable the applicant to meet the learning outcomes of the programme after taking into account all available information and advice from other professionals as appropriate and including discussion of the learning outcomes of the programme. In that event, the Faculty Admissions Manager concerned will be advised that it would not be appropriate to offer a place.

An explanation of the reasons for rejecting the application will be given to the applicant in writing by the Faculty Admissions Manager; the Dean of Students' Office will advise on the wording of the letter. This will invite the applicant to the University to discuss the situation with the Faculty Admissions Manager, the Disability Co-ordinator and, if he has been involved in discussion leading to that conclusion, the University Health Physician. Any options such as deferred entry or, for UCAS applicants, a request to UCAS to choose a replacement course with the support of the University, should be explained in writing and in any subsequent discussion. A written record of the applicant's response should be kept.

If the applicant does not accept the decision and still wishes to pursue the application, then the case should be referred for a final decision by the Academic Registrar who may consult the Faculty Admissions Manager, the Disability Co-ordinator and, if involved, the University Health Physician. The applicant would have recourse to the Admissions Complaints procedure in the usual way.

July 2009

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

Dean of Students' Office

Appendix 3 - Policy and procedures for the protection of students on UEA undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes who are under-18 years old at entry[1; 2]

1. Introduction

A very small proportion of the students admitted to courses at the University of East Anglia are under 18 years of age at the time of entry. Such students are minors in the eyes of the law and thus the University has an enhanced duty of care towards them until the date at which they attain their majority (their 18th birthday), even if this period is relatively brief.

This document has been written in order to:

- define UEA policy in respect of admissions and welfare responsibilities for students who are under-18;
- outline those key legal responsibilities that the university has in respect of those whom the law defines as children;
- define the procedures that have been put into place to ensure that the University meets those responsibilities.

The policy of the University is to treat students who are under-18 years of age as much as possible in the same way that it treats all other students. Such students will be subject to the University's normal rules and regulations and will be able to access the majority of the campus facilities and opportunities offered in the same way as all other students. However, the University will vary its normal procedures, or restrict access to some of its facilities and opportunities whenever it is deemed to be in the best interests of those who are minors, or when it is required to do so by the law. The University will also ensure that minors are provided with enhanced welfare arrangements, particularly when they are resident in University accommodation.

While the general principles of this policy will be adhered to in all cases of student minors, it may be necessary to make additional welfare arrangements for students who will be under 17 at the time of entry, particularly for those under 16, and/or to impose additional conditions of entry. Applications from any such prospective student will be considered individually by the Head of Marketing and Admissions Services, the Dean of Students and the relevant Head of School after the offer has been made.

The University undertakes to ensure that those University staff members who have pastoral/advisory responsibilities for students under 18 are checked for their suitability to undertake such roles. It will also ensure that appropriate reporting arrangements are in place for University staff to contact the Designated Officer if they believe that any student covered by this policy is in any way at risk.

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[1] The University of East Anglia acknowledges the generosity of those institutions who have shared their own under-18 guidance documents including those who have posted their policies on the AMOSSHE members' website (http://www.amosshe.org.uk/) .

[2] The UEA Nursery and the University Sportspark are covered by separate comprehensive child protection policies. Separate/additional policies and procedures have been developed for INTO student minors and for under 18 year olds attending UEA summer schools or 'taster' days. ..

2. Legal framework

There is a number of particular and general pieces of legislation that have relevance for HEIs in respect of their responsibilities to students under 18 years of age. A brief summary of the implications of this legislation is provided below.

Contractual Capacity
Those under 18 years of age are not able to enter into binding contractual relationships in all circumstances. The law is complex in this area but contracts for University fees, accommodation and Student Loans are likely to be enforceable for those under-18 as these are likely to be defined as 'necessaries'. However, it is possible that some contracts may fall outside this definition (for example, agreements for loans from University Hardship Funds) and thus might not be enforceable.

Data protection
Minors over 16 have the same rights under the Data Protection legislation as those over 18. This means that the University will not disclose any information about such students without their specific consent. However, if the student fails to pay any sums agreed on contract then it might be necessary to disclose this to any guarantor and possibly to a debt collection agency.

Staff-student relationships
Section 3 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 provides a new criminal offence of absence of trust which relates to what might before have been perceived as consensual behaviour when it occurs within certain relationships of trust. Within the University context, such relationships of trust will include relationships between a student under 18 and a member of University staff such as an Adviser or lecturer, or a Resident Tutor.

Sale of alcohol and other restricted goods and services
It is an offence for a person under-18 to purchase alcohol and for anyone to sell alcohol to such a person. It is also an offence to purchase alcohol on behalf of someone under-18, whether this is for consumption in licensed premises or publicly elsewhere. There are also age restrictions for a number of other goods including solvents, gas lighter refills and some videos, DVDs and video and computer games and some services, including entrance to venues in which films with an 18 certificate are being shown. An up-to-date list can be found on the PASS website (http://www.pass-scheme.org.uk/).

3. UEA procedures and responsibilities

The University of East Anglia will nominate a Designated Officer with responsibility for oversight of child protection issues within the University. The Officer will have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy including ensuring that relevant equality impact assessments are undertaken.

Admission

Marketing and Admissions Services (MAS) will inform the Dean of Students when a prospective under-18 year old student has been offered a place, giving his/her name, date of birth, course and School. At the same time, MAS will send a letter to the student to pass to their parent/guardian. This letter will inform them of UEA policy and procedures and request that they complete a form agreeing to UEA conditions of entry. A copy of the leaflet *Student Services at UEA* will also be included for information. In the case of a prospective international student whose parent/guardian

is not UK resident, the parent/guardian will be required to nominate a guardian who is resident in the UK who can act on their behalf in emergency situations [3].

The Dean of Students will inform MAS when each consent form has been returned. MAS will require FAOs to ensure that no identified student minor is able to register for their course until the consent form has been completed and returned to DOS. When technology permits, a report will be run at the beginning of each academic year to ensure that no students have slipped through the net

DOS will undertake to inform the following members of staff of the name, date of birth and emergency contact details of student minors:

the Head of School and Senior Adviser (for all Schools admitting minors);
the UEA Accommodation Office (if in University Accommodation);
the Senior Resident Tutor;
the International Student Adviser (in respect of International/EU students).

DOS will ensure that all relevant staff members have an up-to-date copy of this policy as a reminder of their responsibilities.

The same procedures will be followed for all student minors admitted at any time of year, including exchange students.

Accommodation

Student minors will be required to live in University accommodation unless the University has been informed that they will be living in the home of their parent, guardian or other adult formally approved by the parent or guardian. The **UEA Accommodation Office**, in collaboration with the **Dean of Students' Office**, will ensure that all minors who are living in University accommodation are allocated a room in relatively close proximity to that of one of the Resident Tutors. Student minors will normally be allocated a single room.

The **UEA Accommodation Office** will endeavour to ensure that those cleaning staff members who normally service the rooms of student minors have an enhanced CRB check to confirm their suitability to undertake this role.

Other enhanced welfare arrangements

The University will ensure that further enhanced welfare arrangements are put into place for all students up until their 18th birthday. These are outlined below.

Heads of School will ensure that student minors are allocated to an experienced Adviser (normally the Senior Adviser) who has had an enhanced CRB check to confirm his or her suitability to undertake this role.

The **Adviser** will meet with their student minors at the beginning of their course and then at least monthly in term time until they reach the age of 18.

Heads of School will ensure that any content, materials, resources and learning opportunities provided as a part of degree programmes taught in their School, and being attended by a student minor, are appropriate for such students, or that alternative arrangements have been made, or resources provided. Particular attention should be given to the implications for field trips and visits.

[3] The University is not able to assist parents/guardians in finding a suitable guardian. A list of accredited agencies is available from The Association of Educational Guardians for International Students (AEGIS), 66 Humphries Close, Randwick, Stroud, GL5 4NY. Tel: +44 (0)1453 755160. Email aegisuk@btopenworld.co. Web: www.aegisuk.net

The **Dean of Students** will ensure that **Assistant Senior Resident Tutors (ASRTs) and Resident Tutors (RTs)** are informed of the names of student minors in their parish. These RTs will notify the Dean of Students promptly if they have any concerns about the wellbeing of the students concerned. All ASRTs and RTs will be provided with a copy of this document and an opportunity to discuss its implications during their induction training.

The **Dean of Students' Office** will ensure that student minors are fully briefed about the enhanced welfare arrangements that have been put in place for their protection, and reminded of the age restrictions that relate to the purchase of alcohol, certain videos/DVDs and computer games and other goods and services.

The **Students' Union** will take all appropriate steps to ensure that it does not sell alcohol to a student under 18; this is particularly important in light of the fact that the University Campus Card does not give evidence of student age.

All UEA staff members have responsibility for contacting the Designated Officer [4] if they have any concerns about the wellbeing or safety of student minors. The Designated Officer will take responsibility for ensuring that such concerns are investigated and any necessary action is taken, in accordance with relevant UEA procedures and following guidance on best practice from social services, the police and the NSPCC.

Emergencies

In certain circumstances, the University may be required to act on the student's behalf. For example, dealings with the Police or medical emergencies, including mental health emergencies, might require the University to take action. The University will only take such action when the parents/guardian of the student cannot be contacted within the timescale necessitated by the particular situation.

For further information or comments about this policy please contact the Dean of Students (01603 592492; email dos@uea.ac.uk).

DOS October 2006.
Due for next revision: Imminently

[4] The Designated Officer for under-18 year old students on UEA degree programmes is currently the Dean of Students.

Appendix 4: Admission of Students With Near Relatives On University Staff

The University in considering whether to admit a student wishes to ensure that an applicant would not have or be perceived to have an unfair advantage over fellow students due to their family relationship with a member of staff or their own privileged position as a member of staff.

Consequently it considers cases where applicants are members of staff or who have near relatives who are members of staff.

A Senate resolution (4.2.1970, Minute 91) defines near relatives as "husbands or wives or children of members of staff", however the University also considers that parents, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and grandchildren of members of staff may also be regarded as near relatives

The University will not unreasonably deny access to the University to any applicant on the basis of their relationship to another member of staff or their own position as a member of staff

General procedure for assessing applications from staff or their near relatives

1 All members of staff have a responsibility to disclose to the relevant Head of School and Faculty Admissions Office that they are in the employ of the University or are related to a prospective student

2 Where it has been identified by a School of Study that an applicant is a member of University staff or a near relative of a member of University staff, the Admissions Officer concerned will first decide whether the applicant is suitable on academic grounds; this may involve inviting the applicant for interview. The School and Faculty Admissions Office must make provision so that any potential conflict of interest is avoided in forming such a decision. In particular, members of staff must not participate in the interview and admissions of any student to whom they are related. Arrangements must be recorded in writing

3 Where the School does wish to make an offer on academic grounds the Head of School shall refer the application to the Admissions Office in the Registry for the next stage of consideration. The School should not take any further action concerning the applicant until advised by the Admissions Office.

4 The Admissions Office shall seek concession from the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic). The decision as to whether or not to admit and whether special conditions shall apply to that admission will take into account,

- whether the applicant or a near relative of the applicant will have access to sensitive student records
- whether the applicant or a relative of the applicant would be party to the assessment process or teaching or administration of the course in any way

Conditions of entry may include

- Declaration by the Head of School that relevant controls have been put in place to ensure that the applicant will not receive unfair advantage during his/her time at UEA as a consequence of his/her family relationship and that these conditions will be monitored by a named individual

- Inclusion in an Audit List administrated by the Student and Course Records Office

4. The School of Study shall be informed of the decision, together with any conditions of entry, by the Admissions Manager in the Admissions Office. The School shall then use a standard letter to accompany their offer.

UEA Policy Statement

Applicants With Criminal Convictions

University of East Anglia

Appendix 5

- The University of East Anglia actively promotes equality and welcomes students from a wide range of backgrounds. The University aims to ensure that none of its students or potential students receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, other gender related issues, membership of a trade union or offending background.

- The University is an institution with a concentration of young and potentially vulnerable people. Many such people live in accommodation provided for student use by the University. The University in considering whether to admit a student wishes to ensure that an applicant would not constitute an unreasonable risk to its staff or student members or property. Consequently it requires all applicants to declare whether they have a criminal conviction.

- Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to studying at the University. This will depend on the nature of the intended course of study and the circumstances and background of the offences.

- All applicants for courses of more than 10 weeks in duration, full or part-time, are required to make a relevant declaration of criminal convictions at the time of application.

- The criminal conviction disclosure process will vary depending on the intended course of study. For many courses convictions that are 'spent' (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant and you should not reveal them. However, courses which are regulated by a professional organisation or partner – such as teaching, health and social work or other programmes involving work with, children or vulnerable adults – are exempt from the Act and applicants will be asked to declare any criminal convictions, including sentences and cautions (including verbal cautions), reprimands, final warnings and bind-over orders.

- The University will need to see details of convictions in order to be able to assess any relevance to potential admission to a course of study. In assessing information about criminal convictions the University undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject whether of a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure or other disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

- Those who declare criminal convictions will be requested to provide documentation regarding the offence(s) and in many cases this will be documentation from the Probation Service or other appropriate authority.

- Where the criminal conviction of an applicant or existing student requires an assessment to be made by the University as to professional suitability this will be done in accordance with procedures determined by statutory regulation or the

requirements of a professional body and/or professional partner involved in course delivery. In such cases the University is registered to use the CRB Disclosure service. Unless the nature of the course allows the University to ask about the entire criminal record it will only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- As an organisation which may use the CRB Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for admission (or the suitability for continued registration of an existing student) the University of East Anglia complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for admission (and registered students) fairly. This statement of policy will be made available to all CRB Disclosure applicants at the outset of the CRB Disclosure process.

- For those courses where a CRB Disclosure is required, all information about the course will contain a statement that a CRB Disclosure will be required for admission to, and for some courses where this is justifiably required by a relevant professional body or professional partner involved in course delivery for continued registration on, the course.

- Whether the level of CRB Disclosure required will be Standard or Enhanced is dependant upon the nature of the specific course concerned and will take account of guidance from both the Criminal Records Bureau and the relevant professional body and/or professional partner involved in course delivery.

- The University may involve the relevant professional body and/or professional partner in determining an applicant's (or existing student's) suitability for admission to (or continued registration on) the course. In such cases consent will be sought from the applicant (or existing student) to reveal CRB Disclosure information to the named relevant professional body and/or professional partner.

- The University ensures that all those involved in the disclosure process receive suitable training and guidance to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. The University will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation.

- The University undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the applicant or existing student before withdrawing an offer of a place at the University or requiring a student to withdraw from their course of study

- The University will make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

The Registry
Admissions Office

Taught Admissions Code of Practice

University of East Anglia

Appendix 6: Policy on Provision of Feedback

The University recognises that provision of constructive feedback is an element of good customer care and will provide such feedback to applicants who have been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place of study on request from that applicant. Feedback on specific applications will not be offered to other parties (eg parents or teachers) without the express consent of the applicant.

Requests for feedback must be made by the applicant in writing within three months of the date that the application was unsuccessful. Faculty Admissions Offices must in return provide feedback in writing within 15 working days of receipt of a request for feedback, or inform applicants when feedback will be provided.

Feedback will be made in the form of a standard set of text which indicates into which rejection category the applicant was placed. Additional comments about specific cases may be included, which may take the form of advice as to how to improve any future applications.

The University will not normally offer further feedback but it is at the discretion of the Admissions Officer to decide whether to enter into further correspondence after the provision of initial feedback or to review a decision. Any decision to overturn a rejection must be made in the context of the admissions criteria applied to all other applications to that programme of study.

The University will move towards a policy of systematically providing reasons for rejection to all applications made through UCAS using the standard text outlined below.

Feedback categories and standard text

1. Failure to meet a specific entry requirement (e.g. A-level Mathematics)
2. Failure to achieve (or unlikely to achieve) the required grades for entry (e.g. standard offer level)
3. Failure to matriculate (meet minimum general entry requirements)
4. Unsuccessful interview
5. Failure to attend interview
6. Unsatisfactory personal statement (below standard or not related to subject applied to)
7. Unsatisfactory reference
8. Sample of work submitted was below the required standard
9. Failure to respond to communications/ request for further information
10. Application received after deadline and course is already full

Appendix 7
University of East Anglia
Admissions Complaints Procedure

The following procedure exists in order that applicants rejected by the University can challenge an admissions decision if they have reason to believe that the decision was subject to procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias, or that extenuating circumstances should be, and have not already been, taken into account. The challenge would be dealt with as a form of complaint.

The formal Admissions Complaints Procedure is a one stage process, because of the need for speed. Applicants who have been rejected by University of East Anglia, particularly in the undergraduate arena, will need to know very quickly whether that decision is final so that they can pursue their applications for study elsewhere.

The University will initially encourage all applicants, undergraduate and postgraduate to try to resolve any complaint, in the first instance, in an informal manner. This will mean by taking the matter up with the person most directly involved and is likely in most cases to be the Faculty Admissions Office that has processed and made a decision on the application. If at this point the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Faculty Admissions Manager, should refer the matter to the Operations Officer, in Marketing and Admissions Services.

The formal procedure will then commence, which may result in the complaint being upheld.

Making a Formal Complaint

1. Any applicant who wishes to make a formal complaint about an admissions decision shall be referred to the Operations Officer in Marketing and Admissions Services, from where the Complaints Procedure will be coordinated.

2. Marketing and Admissions Services shall write to the applicant and request full written details of the reason and grounds for complaint. The applicant should provide this information in writing, using the Complaints Form within 10 working days from the receipt of the letter. The Operations Officer shall contact the appropriate Faculty Admissions Manager, to inform them of the complaint.

3. All complaints that are received from applicants, are recorded confidentially within MAS and monitored as appropriate.

4. Failure on the part of an applicant to produce the requested documentation within a 10 working day period would result in the closure of the case by Marketing and Admissions Services.

Initial assessment of complaint

5. On receipt of the written details from the applicant (hereafter known as the complainant) by Marketing and Admissions Services, an initial assessment of the

complaint shall be made. If the matters raised by the complainant concern an academic decision then action will be taken according to paragraphs 6-8 below. If the matters raised, concern a decision relating to an applicant's criminal conviction then action will be taken according to paragraph 9. If the matters raised concern a decision relating to an applicant's special educational needs then action will be taken according to paragraph 10.

The Operations Officer will contact the complainant within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, to confirm what action will be taken or if a decision has been reached by the panel. In certain circumstances, further information may be asked for by the panel to reach a decision, which may result in extending this time frame.

Academic decisions

6. On receipt of the written details from the applicant by Marketing and Admissions Services, an initial assessment of the complaint shall be made. The assessment will be conducted by the Academic Registrar and, depending on whether the application was for a taught or research programme of study, either the Director of Taught Programmes or the Director of Research Programmes, supported by the Operations Officer. An initial decision will be taken on whether the complainant has a substantive case that should be progressed through investigation. If the initial assessment finds that there is no substantive case then the complaint should be rejected and the complainant informed of the decision with reasons for the judgment, which shall be final. The Faculty Admissions Manager will also be notified of the decision.

7. If the initial assessment determines that there is a substantive case to be investigated then the University will be required to produce a written response to the complaint with supporting evidence. The Academic Registrar and Director of Taught/Research Programmes will decide on the case and, if appropriate, any remedy on the basis of the evidence presented.

8. The University will respond to the complainant in writing with details of the findings indicating the outcome, and if the complaint is upheld, what the remedy will be. The Faculty Admissions Manager will also be advised of the outcome. The decision will be final.

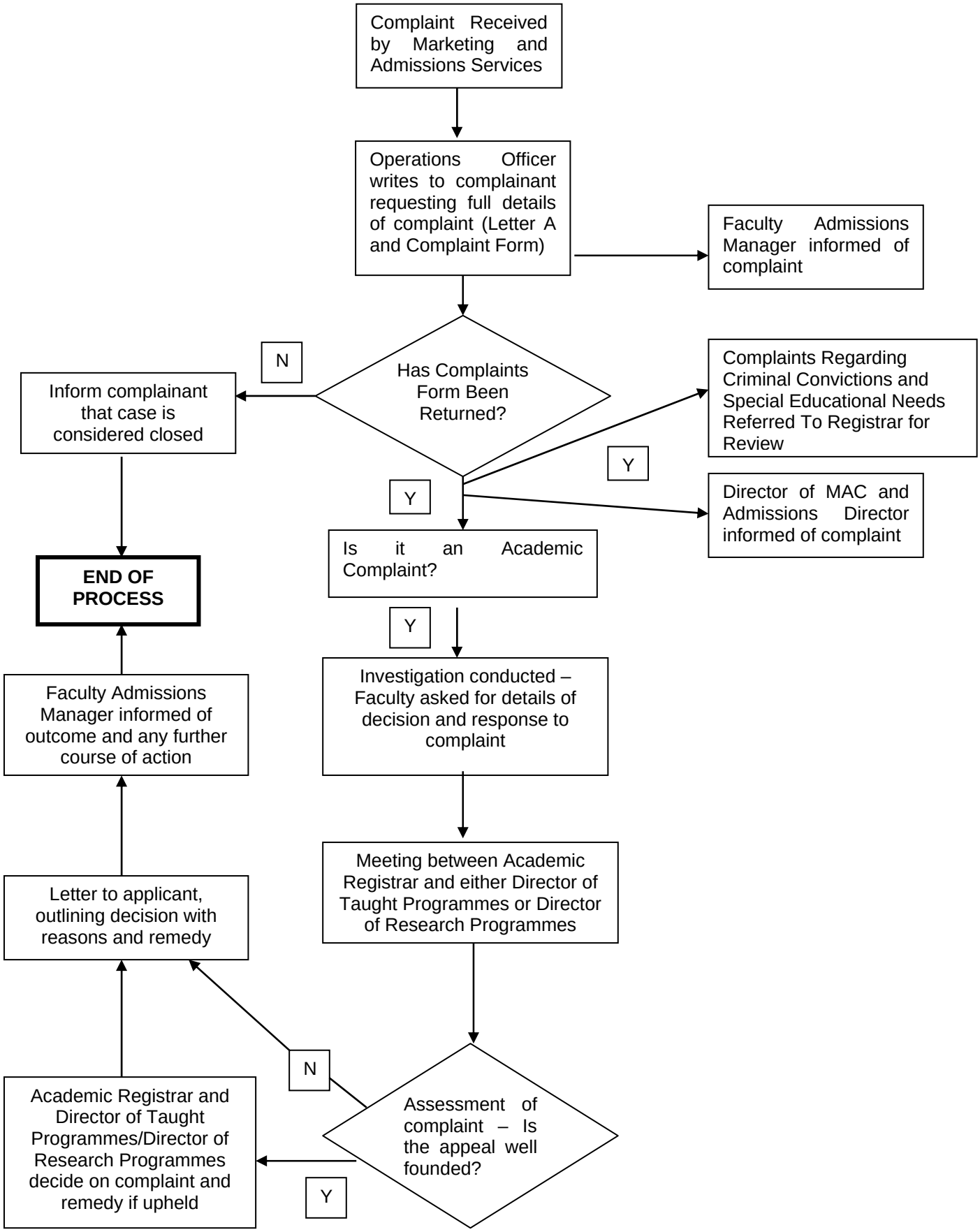
Decisions concerning criminal convictions

9. In the case where a decision to reject an applicant has concerned a criminal conviction, a formal route exists whereby an applicant rejected following an assessment of his/her convictions can apply to the Registrar for a review on the grounds of procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias, or extenuating circumstances. The decision of the Registrar is final.

Decisions concerning disability or special educational needs

10. In the case where the University has not been able to offer a place to an applicant following an assessment of support needs, a formal route exists whereby an applicant can apply to the Registrar for a review on the grounds of procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias, or extenuating circumstances. The decision of the Registrar is final.

Updated November 2008
Marketing and Admissions Services

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
MARKETING AND ADMISSIONS SERVICES

Procedure for Processing Applicant Complaints