The London Interdisciplinary School

Admissions Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the School's approach to admissions onto its programme, including its policies, its criteria for admission, its admissions procedure, and provisions for applicant complaints and appeals.

The School is committed to delivering a fair admissions system that admits students of outstanding achievement and potential, irrespective of their background. In so doing, the School is committed to the 5 key principles of Fair Admissions as outlined in the Schwartz report: transparency, minimising barriers to entry, selecting for merit, potential and diversity, professionalism and using assessment methods that are reliable and valid.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants to the School for its undergraduate programme.

Policies

The School's recruitment and admissions policies and procedures must be clear, fair, lawful and have due regard to the legitimate interests of prospective students.

Recruitment and admissions shall be founded on the principles of selection according to merit and equality of opportunity. The School will encourage applications from as diverse a range of applicants as possible through its access and outreach activities, and through its commitment to considering each candidate's academic attainment in the context of their background (educational, familial and personal).

Applicants with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be encouraged to disclose these so that reasonable adjustments may be made, in line with the School's Disability Policy. .

Tier 4 international students (non-EEA and Switzerland citizens) will need to meet any particular requirements stipulated by UK Visas and Immigration.

The criteria to be applied in the selection process for a programme must be specified in advance of the consideration of candidates, and have received formal approval from the Academic Council. These criteria are set out below in this policy.

The decision as to whether an applicant shall be offered a place and admitted to a programme of study rests with the Learning Director, or by delegation with the Director of Recruitment and Admissions (or their nominee).

The Learning Director shall retain the right to determine the maximum or minimum intake for individual modules, providing that an applicant may not be denied admission to any core modules which contribute to the programme of study for which they are registered.

An individual verification of the academic qualifications obtained prior to entry may be undertaken, either during the admission process or following enrolment but before registration as a student. As part of this verification, applicants may be required to provide certification to verify their academic qualifications.

Criteria for admission

The categories of entry criteria for admission to the School's programme are as follows:

- Minimum general entry requirements;
- For students whose first language is not English, there are English language requirements;
- Programme-specific requirements;
- Discretionary criteria where there is competition for places.

There may be additional admission requirements for Tier 4 international students (non-EEA and Switzerland citizens), in accordance with the UK Visas and Immigration regulations valid at the point of application.

Minimum general entry requirements

Applicants must normally be at least 18 years of age on admission to the School. For the purpose of this policy, the date of admission is defined as the 1st of October in the relevant academic year. The Learning Director may waive this requirement for applicants who will be at least 16 but less than 18 years of age on admission, on an individual basis, provided that a contract of care has been agreed in advance between the School and the parents or guardian of the student as to additional safeguards and other requirements that will be necessary. The contract must also include the acknowledgement that the School will not act *in loco parentis*.

English Language Requirement for International Students

Applicants for the School's programme whose first language is not English will be required to demonstrate their ability to understand and express themselves in English reading, writing, listening and speaking to derive full benefit from and succeed in passing the programme.

Applicants from outside the United Kingdom can provide evidence on their English language capabilities as outlined below:

- If the student is a national of a Majority English Speaking Country (as defined at https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english); or,
- If the student has been taught and assessed in the English language throughout their educational career.

Applicants who do not meet these criteria may be required to demonstrate that they possess recognised English language qualification such as:

- IELTS Academic (6.0 overall with a minimum of 5.5 in each component);
- Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English/ Cambridge Certification of Proficiency in English (169 overall with a minimum of 160 in each component);
- IGCSE in English as a first language, or Cambridge GCE O level (English), or Cambridge GCE A level (any of which must be grade C or above);
- International Baccalaureate (standard/higher), English (grade 4 or above);
- PTE Academic (50 overall with a minimum of 42 in each component);
- TOEFL (60-78 overall with a minimum of 46 in each component).

Scores are valid for a maximum period of two years prior to the date of registration.

Any student in respect of whom it becomes apparent that their ability in the English language is not at the required level for successful completion of the programme, may be required by the Learning Director to take an English language proficiency test. If the result of the test reveals that the student's standard of English is below that required for admission, the student may be required to take action, at their own cost, to remedy the deficiency, within timescales agreed by the Learning Director, or otherwise to leave the programme.

Programme-specific requirements

The School does not set minimum grade thresholds for entry into its programme. Instead, the School looks at every applicant's academic achievement in the context of their background (their school background, their family background, and any disadvantages they may have head). Aside from academic attainment (which is viewed in the context of the candidate's background), the School will consider a candidate's general cognitive abilities, their passions, mindsets and behaviours, and their interpersonal skills in determining whether to offer the candidate a place on the programme. These criteria are based on the abilities required to achieve the programme's learning outcomes and succeed on the programme, and are confirmed by the Academic Council.

Admissions procedure

All candidates will apply as normal through UCAS. The School is open to all subject backgrounds. Candidates will have the option to upload a short video, audio or text file telling us why they're applying to the School.

All applications for a programme beginning in October of that year should be received by UCAS by the deadline of 15th January. Applications made before the closing date will be considered equally against the stated selection criteria and in the context of the number of available places. The School will consider late applications only for courses where places are still available.

The School will review applications based on the candidate's UCAS reference, their academic achievement in the context of their background, and any submission they've chosen to upload. The School will not review the candidate's Personal Statement, which may to be tailored to a different academic discipline.

In considering the candidate's academic achievement in the context of their background, the School will consider:

- The candidate's school background, in terms of attainment and educational advantage:
  - The average attainment of the candidate's school:
    - Percentage of students achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE (including English and Maths;
    - Best 8 GCSE Performance Score;
    - Average QCA points (qualification points) per qualification per entry;
    - Average QCA points per qualification per student;
  - The proportion of the school's pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals or education maintenance allowance.
  - The location of the school (and the participation in higher education in that location) POLAR.
  - For Scottish candidates, the Scottish equivalent will be considered – i.e., % students achieving 5+ SCQF Level 4 (incl. English & Maths); Best 8 SCQF Level 4 Performance Score; Average Tariff points per qualification per entry and per student; Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- Where the candidate lives:
  - The level of participation in higher education in that area (POLAR).
- The candidate's family background:
  - Whether or not the candidate's parents attended university.
- Any disadvantages the candidate may have had:
  - Whether the candidate has been in care;
  - Whether the candidate has a disability.
- Any other individual contextual data available from UCAS at the point of the candidate's application.

In considering the student's UCAS reference and any elective submission they have made through UCAS, the School will consider the candidate's passion, mindsets and behaviours (notably, their passion for problem-solving, their openness to complexity/ambiguity, their appetite to engage with the world, their tenacity).

Candidates will be shortlisted based on their academic attainment in the context of their school background, family background and any other disadvantages they may have had, as well as on the strengths of any submission they have made via UCAS on why they wish to join the programme, and the personal insights contained in their UCAS reference.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the School's Discovery Day, which will take place at the School in the Spring of the year of admission. The Discovery Day is designed to further

assess the candidates' potential to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme for which they are applying. To this end, the factors taken into account are: the candidate's general cognitive abilities (verbal, numerical, spatial, abstract); the candidate's passions, mindsets and behaviours (passion for problem-solving, openness to complexity/ambiguity, appetite to engage with the world, tenacity); and the candidate's interpersonal skills (oracy, empathy, self-awareness, ability to respond to feedback). These will be assessed through a mixture of structured interviews; structured team problem-solving tasks; and general cognitive tests (verbal, numerical, spatial, abstract). Where oracy skills are assessed, the candidate's contextual information (educational, family, personal background) will be taken into consideration.

The Discovery Day, which aims to measure candidate potential rather than historical achievement, does not require preparation. All aspects of the day are optional, but the more assessments a candidate undertakes, the greater opportunity they will have to demonstrate their potential, and the more information the School will have to enable a confirmation of the candidate's suitability for a place.

All candidates offered a place will be given a contextual offer, which will be determined based on their personal circumstances (school, family, personal background) and their predicted grades.

All candidates who are offered a place to study at the School will receive an offer letter detailing the terms and conditions of the offer. This will include details of individual requirements that need to be fulfilled before the candidate can be admitted to the School. Offer letters will be sent out either by post or as an email attachment. The School's terms and conditions can be found on the School website.

Offer holders are responsible for providing evidence that they have met the terms and conditions of their offer. This evidence could include for example, certificates and degree transcripts once these become available.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Candidates who wish to be exempted from any aspect of the admissions criteria on the basis of prior certificated or experiential learning may do so in line with the School's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

Data Protection

All personal data of candidates and prospective candidates will be handled in line with the School's Data Protection Policy.

Misrepresentation or Fraudulent Information within an Application

In cases where an application is discovered during the admissions process to contain misrepresentation or fraudulent information, the Head of Admissions will have the authority to

reject an application or revoke an offer of admission. If such evidence of fraudulent information in the application of a candidate is discovered after the registration of that candidate, the case shall be considered by the Chief Executive, who will have the authority to terminate the student's registration.

Documentation Requirements

The Registrar will maintain prospectuses for the School listing all approved programmes and their modules of study. The prospectus will also provide general information on costs, fees, the availability of financial assistance, and guides on the study sites.

Candidates with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

In selecting students, equitable consideration must be given to all candidates. On being called to a Discovery Day, or on being made an offer, a student with a disability shall be invited to discuss the support required to complete the programme with a trained and specially designated member of staff to:

- Ensure that the student is fully aware of the demands of the programme;
- Identify any resources or arrangements that the student requires;
- Determine whether the School can reasonably provide these.

Where adjustments are reasonable, the School shall deal with the student efficiently and fairly.

For candidates attending a Discovery Day who have disclosed a disability, reasonable adjustments will be made as necessary and appropriate. All applications to the School will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability for the programme, and discussions about the support requirements of students will be separate from any academic decision.

Where reasonable adjustments have been agreed with a candidate who has accepted an offer of a place on the programme, the School will provide the student with a clear record of the adjustments to be made in the form of an accessible learning contract. The learning contract shall set out as a minimum:

- A clear, precise and accurate listing of adjustments to be provided by the School;
- An agreed clear contact point for the student during their studies;
- A clear statement as to the expectations of the School that the student will keep the School reasonably and expeditiously informed as to any alterations in their disability and resulting effects on their study.

Further details on the School's approach to reasonable adjustments can be found in the School's Disability Policy.

Candidates Convicted of a Criminal Offence

The School acknowledges the role of education in rehabilitation, and also acknowledges that a criminal record may not debar an applicant from admission unless the nature and seriousness of the offence in question is incompatible with:

- The programme applied for; or
- Participation in an academic and social setting; or
- The School's responsibility for a safe and neutral environment for students and staff.

An applicant for admission to the School who has received a police caution or been convicted of a criminal offence must declare the police caution or conviction in their application.

An applicant who receives a police caution or is convicted of a criminal offence after applying to the School, whether before or after registration, must declare the police caution or conviction immediately.

The School reserves the right to withdraw or amend any offer of admission, or the prevent the enrolment and registration of, or to terminate the registration of any applicant that it discovers has withheld information about a police caution or conviction.

Where an applicant has a police caution or a criminal conviction the School may ask the applicant's permission to seek further references from an individual or body it considers appropriate. In certain circumstances, this may include a police check on the applicant's criminal record. A refusal of permission to the School may prevent further consideration of the application, or termination of registration.

Admissions With Credit

Prior certificated and experiential learning of students admitted and registered on a programme may be accredited against modules on that programme of study and exemptions are granted, provided that any such accreditation and exemption are consistent with the terms governing the programme and award. Further details on recognition of prior learning are given in the School's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

Applicants Wishing to Reapply

Applicants who are unsuccessful may apply again in a subsequent year. Applications will be considered against the standard course entry criteria for that year of entry. The new application should demonstrate an improvement from the previous application. We may draw upon all information from previous applications when assessing suitability for the programme.

Clearing Applications

The School will advertise any vacancies that are available after the close of the main UCAS admission cycle on UCAS and the School website. A telephone hotline service will be available for enquirers. Suitably qualified applicants will be considered against the published entry

criteria. As A-level results are released in mid-August, please note that where additional requirements may need to be completed prior to admission, it may not be possible to start immediately. For example, there may be insufficient time to investigate an applicant who declares a criminal conviction.

Complaints and Appeals

Applicants may choose to challenge the School's admissions processes and decisions under the School's Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure on the following grounds:

- An applicant may raise a *complaint* regarding a specific procedural error, irregularity, or maladministration in LIS's admissions process.
- An applicant may *appeal* an admissions decision, or the wording/terms/conditions of an offer, or a pre-entry fee status decision, on the grounds that the decision/offer was not made fairly on the basis of the evidence originally submitted.

Applicants may not appeal against admissions decisions based on the academic judgment of the School staff about their suitability for entry to a particular programme.

An admissions appeal shall not be considered where the applicant does not meet any criteria specified for entry to the programme of study. Further, the School will not review an admissions decision simply because an applicant disagrees with or wishes to challenge the admissions criteria set by the School.

Further details on how and on what grounds an applicant may make a complaint or appeal can be found in the School's Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

Monitoring and Review

The School's Admissions Policy will be reviewed annually and amended as appropriate by the School's Academic Council.

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Related documents: (eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)	Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** **Disability Policy** **Recognition of Prior Learning Policy** **Data Protection Policy**

Version Control			
Version	**Author [name]**	**Date**	**Brief summary of changes**
1	**Hannah Kohler**	**20/02/2019**	**Original draft**