ADMISSIONS POLICY

1. Aims

1.1 The University of Bolton aims to:

- attract and retain students, from a wide and diverse community, who have the potential to succeed and benefit from the experience;
- ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all applicants, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and religious belief, to gain admission to a course suited to their aspirations, and their ability to meet the academic demands and professional requirements of the course.

1.2 The University will achieve these aims by:

- ensuring that clear, consistent and accessible information and guidance is available to all stakeholders in the admissions process e.g. applicants, parents and families, schools, colleges, employers and sponsors and all University staff involved in the admissions process;
- assessing all applications on an individual basis;
- ensuring that all assessment methods used for the selection of students are reliable, appropriate and fair, and take into account prior learning and experience, national qualifications guidelines, formal University-level agreements in determining stage of entry, English language proficiency and the requirement to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- ensuring that the principles surrounding the procedures for admission to the University are as transparent and accessible as possible;
- ensuring that all staff involved in making decisions about an applicant’s entry to the University do so in a clear, consistent and reliable manner.

1.3 This policy and associated procedures comply with relevant legislation and are designed to ensure that the University takes note of the precepts of section 10 of the QAA Code of practice: Admissions to Higher Education (September 2006). The Policy also takes into account the principles outlined by the Admissions to Higher Education Review (Schwartz) (2004).
2. **Entry Requirements**

2.1 All applications are assessed on an individual basis and admission to the University is based on an applicant’s relative merits and abilities. The principal academic criterion for determining a candidate’s suitability for admission to a course is that there is a reasonable expectation that he/she will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course and achieve the standard required for an award. The University will look for evidence of academic achievement as well as personal and work/professional experience that provide an indication of ability to meet the academic demands and professional requirements of the course.

2.2 Specific entry criteria for a given course are set by the School delivering the course in close consultation with the Head of Marketing and Recruitment. Minimum academic criteria are specified in terms of the national qualifications framework and as indicated within the UCAS tariff, with indicative alternative qualifications summarised for international applicants.

2.3 Entry criteria are reviewed annually and updated as required.

2.4 Entry criteria are published in the University Prospectus and on the University website.

2.5 Applicants who declare a disability will be contacted by the University’s Disability Adviser in order to assess their individual learning needs. The Adviser will provide information and advice on a range of matters relating to studying at the university.

2.6 Information contained on application forms is normally treated as confidential within the University and will only be used by the University for purposes of admission decisions. However, to prevent and detect fraud, we reserve the right to, or we may have to, give outside organisations, including the police, the Home Office, local authorities, examination boards or awarding bodies, and the Department of Work and Pensions and its agencies, information from an applicant’s form.

2.7 The University may at its discretion vary its standard offer, taking into account the individual circumstances of applicants.

2.8 The University reserves the right to take reasonable steps in order to establish the residential status of applicants i.e. home/EU or overseas.

2.9 The University may, if it has just cause, withdraw any offer to study on one of its programmes.
3. **Admissions Procedures**

3.1 To ensure consistency of process, written admissions procedures exist that cover:

- Home/EU FE, undergraduate and postgraduate admissions
- International admissions
- Research admissions

These procedures are maintained and updated as required by:

- Home/EU FE, undergraduate and postgraduate admissions – Admissions Team
- International admissions – Centre for International Relations
- Research admissions – Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement

3.2 All admissions procedures are made available in electronic and hard copy format to all staff engaged in admissions processes, whether academic or professional staff.

4. **Transparency and Consistency**

4.1 The University is committed to providing clear, accurate, complete and accessible information on its courses, relevant entry requirements and associated admissions procedures.

4.2 The University strives to ensure that clear, accessible information is made available with regard to any non-academic requirements for entry to its courses. Where additional methods of assessment (e.g. interview or portfolio submission) are used to select candidates, this will be explicitly stated for the benefit of applicants in the University Prospectus and on the University website.

4.3 The majority of all home/EU admissions decisions are made by trained staff in the University’s Admissions Office. Where decisions are made by academic Admissions Tutors in the Schools, these are communicated to applicants via staff in the Admissions Office and monitored to ensure consistency of process and decision.

5. **Responsibilities**

5.1 The Head of Marketing and Recruitment and Directors of Schools are responsible for ensuring that:

- Admissions processes for all FE, undergraduate and taught postgraduate applicants are clear and updated regularly;
- All Admissions staff are aware of and support the University’s Admissions Policy and associated procedures; are competent to make fair and sound judgements; are trained to an appropriate
standard in admissions work; are aware of the University’s policy on Equity and Diversity and how to obtain further advice on issues related to Equity and Diversity when dealing with enquiries and applications; have sufficient time to carry out their duties to a high standard.

5.2 The Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Directors of Schools/Research Centres are responsible for ensuring that:

- Admissions processes for research applicants are clear and updated regularly;
- All staff responsible for the selection and admission of research applicants are aware of and support the University’s Admissions Policy and associated procedures; are competent to make fair and sound judgements; are trained to an appropriate standard in admissions work; are aware of the University’s policy on Equity and Diversity and how to obtain further advice on issues related to Equity and Diversity when dealing with enquiries and applications; have sufficient time to carry out their duties to a high standard

6. Applicants with Criminal Convictions/CRB Checks

6.1 In the majority of cases, a prior criminal conviction will not preclude a candidate from being offered a place at the University. However, the University will be required to assess such applications in order to ensure that neither the applicant, the staff, nor students of the University will be put at risk should an applicant, who declares a criminal conviction, become a student of the University.

6.2 Applicants for programmes that will involve contact with young or vulnerable persons are required to submit an Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau.

6.3 The University reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place, if the outcome of the Disclosure indicates that the applicant will not be able to successfully complete the course.

7. Course Changes

7.1 Changes to any of the University’s courses involving significant restructuring or discontinuation will be communicated to applicants affected by such changes at the earliest possible opportunity. The Admissions Office is responsible for co-ordinating the process of communicating with applicants affected by changes to courses and ensuring that appropriate advice is given to applicants.

8. Information to Applicants

8.1 All applicants in receipt of an offer to study at the University will be given an “Information for Applicants in Receipt of an Offer” booklet
which will contain information on the obligations placed on prospective students.

8.2 The University will ensure that all successful applicants are provided with full, detailed and accessible information concerning their enrolment to the University. Joining instructions will be issued to all successful applicants providing full details of the enrolment/induction process.

9. Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants

9.1 Feedback will only be provided on request due to the very high number of applications received. Feedback will usually only be provided to the applicants themselves and not to any third party e.g. parents or other family members, teachers, employers.

10. Appeals and Complaints

10.1 There is no right of appeal for unsuccessful applicants. However, where the applicant can demonstrate that at the time the decision was made there was an omission of a material nature in their application, which may have resulted in a different outcome, they should put the facts in writing addressed in the first instance, to the Head of Marketing and Recruitment.

10.2 Where an applicant believes that their application has not been dealt with fairly, or in accordance with the University's policies, principles and procedures, they should first put their case in writing, addressed in the first instance, to the Head of Marketing and Recruitment.

10.3 If the matter can not be resolved by the above, then applicants can also avail themselves of the University's Complaints procedures.

10.4 The University will normally respond to all matters relating to appeals and complaints about admissions within 28 days.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 The University Admissions Policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and the Head of Marketing and Recruitment (in liaison with the Centre for International Relations) in order to ensure it continues to meet national and institutional requirements.