

University Code of Practice Recruitment, Selection and Admission (Professional Courses)

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Summary/ Description:

This document sets out the University's approach to, and procedures for, the recruitment, selection and admission (RSA) of students to Professional Courses and applies up to the point at which a prospective student is enrolled on a Professional course. Applications for admission to a University professional course will be considered only based on whether the applicant meets the University's entry requirements (general and those specific to the course). The University will also provide support to enquirers and applicants who need additional help in the RSA process.

Responsibility for making decisions under this Code rests with the Professional Development Coordinator regarding whether the applicant meets the specific entry requirements for the course; the final say over admission rests with the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education regarding whether the applicant meets the general entry criteria especially regarding such matters as criminal convictions (which are not an automatic bar to entry).

This Code details (in chapter I):

- information which potential applicants need to know before applying
- the general entry requirements (specific entry requirements will be published for each course)
- the process of application and selection (including the sources of evidence used for making selection decisions, and the outcomes of the decision).

The University will provide feedback **to** unsuccessful applicants ensuring that they are provided with clear reasons for the decision enabling them to understand why the application was not accepted and any steps they could take to prepare better for a future application, should they wish to do so.

Chapter II of the Code sets out the University's approach to obtaining feedback **from** applicants (successful and unsuccessful) as a means of helping the University to continuously improve its procedures and their implementation. Applicants also have a right of complaint, adopting a similar approach to the rights of enrolled students. Complaints are the responsibility of the Manager of Academic Quality and Learning to ensure that they are addressed by an officer who has not been involved in the application and the matters in dispute.

This university Code has been written in accordance with the approach approved by the University to enhance clarity involving the following terminology: **must** = mandatory **should** = advisable **may** = desirable.
Where these terms are used they are emphasised in bold.

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INTRODUCTION

Authority

- 1 The Registrar is the final arbiter of the application and interpretation of this code of practice.

Scope of the Code

- 2 This Code applies to courses classified by the University as Professional Courses.
- 3 This Code covers the following range of activities:
 - (a) those activities targeted at individuals who are actively considering applying to the University to study a professional course – termed ‘prospective students’ - and which are designed to help them make informed decisions about whether they wish to apply for a course and, if so, which course
 - (b) the process of making an application for a professional course
 - (c) the process through which applications will be considered, and the University’s communication with successful and unsuccessful applicants
 - (d) the information and guidance provided to applicants from the point when they apply to the point at which they formally enrol at the University and commence their course.
- 4 This Code includes complaints by applicants in respect of the decision regarding their admission.

Application to collaborative provision

This Code applies to all provision referred to in paragraph 2 whether that provision is delivered by the University or another approved provider in accordance with a formal legal agreement.

PRINCIPLES

Fair admission

- 5 The University is committed to the highest standards of fairness and integrity in conducting all activities relating to Recruitment, Selection and Admission.
- 6 The University’s commitment includes a commitment to promoting and ensuring equal opportunity. In respect of Recruitment, Selection and Admission, this means that the University will make every effort to ensure that there is no direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation against enquirers or applicants relating to the following characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including non-belief), sex, and sexual orientation. In determining the selection of applicants, and in advising potential applicants, the only consideration **must** be whether the individual meets, or is likely to meet, the general entry requirements and the requirements of the specific course.

- 7 The following sections set out the criteria which the University will take into account and the processes through which it seeks to ensure equality of opportunity and the principles of fairness set out above.

CHAPTER I: THE RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND ADMISSION PROCESS

Who decides?

- 8 Responsibility for the Recruitment, Selection and Admission process rests with the Professional Development Coordinator, who reports to the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education.
- 9 Decisions about selection – whether to accept an application for a place on a University professional course – are made by the Professional Development Coordinator subject to final oversight by the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education. The Professional Development Coordinator is responsible for determining the suitability of the applicant for the course in terms of their academic ability and likely commitment to the course, and therefore their potential to succeed on the course. The Professional Development Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the general entry requirements are satisfied and that any specific issues have been addressed which would mean either that the applicant should not be offered a place, or that specific arrangements need to be put in place to safeguard the interests of the applicant and/or others. Examples (set out more fully in the following sections) include applicants who will be under 18 at the time of starting a course and applicants with criminal convictions.

Before applying

Deadlines for applying

- 10 The University publishes the deadlines for applying for each course on its website. In exceptional circumstances an application for a course may be accepted once the deadline for that course has passed. The final authority on whether a late application will be accepted rests with the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education; but in any event a late applicant will not be accepted after missing an assessment or other non-recoverable component of the course. A late applicant will be provided with advice about the possibility of applying for a future intake of the course.

Number of places available

- 11 The University places a limit on the number of places available for each course (which may vary between intakes). The limit is designed to ensure that students are appropriate for the type of learning experience which the University aims to offer, that the learning and teaching resources (including staff) are sufficient, and may also reflect external constraints, such as where the course is externally funded or regulated. Where possible or relevant, the limit for the intake of each course is published on the University's website.

Application and other fees

- 12 Tuition fees for each course are subject to ratification by the Board of Governors. Information relating to each course will make explicit to potential applicants the tuition fees, and any additional fees or costs involved in undertaking the course

General entry requirements

- 13 To be admitted to a professional course leading to an award an applicant must satisfy:
- (a) the University's requirements for admission to the University, and
 - (a) such entry requirements as are specified for the particular course.
- 14 The following paragraphs set out those general entry requirements. The specific entry requirements for each course are stated on the relevant course webpage along with the details of the course.

Re-admission of former students

- 15 Former students whose course was terminated as a result of a proven offence of academic misconduct under the Code on Academic Misconduct (PCQH:C5) will not be admitted to another course of the University other than in very exceptional circumstances as determined by the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education following consultation with the Academic Quality and Learning Manager and the Registrar.
- 16 Former students whose behaviour caused concern and/or distress to fellow students or university staff will not be admitted to another course.

English language proficiency

- 17 The University's courses are delivered and assessed in English (with the exception of some units within courses designed for language learning). Applicants whose first language is not English may be required to demonstrate appropriate evidence of English Language proficiency through an acceptable test. In such circumstances, the University Language Centre will provide the applicants with an on-line test.

Disabilities

- 18 The University welcomes applications from those with a disability and will work with enquirers and applicants to help them make an informed decision about whether the University is the right place to study, and whether a course is suitable for them. Applicants are encouraged to declare any disability or ongoing medical condition, including mental health condition, so that their support needs can be discussed with them and to ensure their needs can be met. Applicants are encouraged to visit the University to help them identify their needs in the context of the campus and its facilities (especially those students whose mobility is impaired).
- 19 Where a decision may need to take into account any overriding health and safety concerns, and/or barriers relating to professional training requirements associated with the outcomes of

the professional course, this will also be taken with full discussion with the applicant and any possible alternatives considered.

- 20 Where a prospective student with a disability applies and is enrolled on a course, University staff will work with the student to develop a Statement of Reasonable Adjustments setting out the arrangements that will be made to support their studies in the context of each form of learning, teaching and assessment, if applicable, that they will encounter. (See the Code on Assessment Procedures (PCQH:C3)).

Pregnancy and maternity

- 21 Where an applicant informs the University that they are pregnant or in maternity, and where applicable, the University will work with them to discuss their needs, including the timing of maternity leave.

Criminal convictions

- 22 The University has a duty of care to the whole University population and therefore anyone who applies for admission to a University professional course is required to declare whether they have any criminal convictions. A criminal record does not necessarily prevent a student from studying at the University. In addition, applicants are advised to make their own checks as to whether a previous conviction (whether or not deemed to be spent) may have an effect on future study or professional career progression, for example, the ability to join a professional body.
- 23 The University treats the information given in a respectful and confidential way and undertakes a risk assessment, separate from the academic decision within the admissions process, of what the implications may be of admitting the applicant to a course of study and the University community. The University may request further information where it deems this necessary to enable a proper decision to be made. These procedures are designed to ensure that any application from an applicant who has a criminal record is fairly assessed, taking into account the interests of the individual concerned, the wider university community, legal requirements and (where appropriate) the particular requirements of relevant professional bodies.
- 24 In the majority of cases applicants declaring previous convictions will be allowed to proceed to consideration for a place. In some cases, for example, if the offence(s) are against the person, and/or of a certain nature, the risk assessment may also need to include whether it would be in the applicant's interests to be admitted into the University community. As a result of some risk assessments, permission for the application to proceed to consideration for a place may be refused, or may carry conditions.
- 25 Applicants will be advised when it is necessary to involve a third party. Applicants will be given the option not to have their information shared with a third party that the University regards as relevant in the risk assessment process, but if the applicant does not agree to the sharing of the information their application may not be able to be progressed any further.

- 26 There are other circumstances post-entry that may also require an applicant/student to undergo risk assessment, such as participating in certain extra-curricular activities that involve working with children and/or vulnerable adults.
- 27 Where the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education determines, after taking such advice as they consider appropriate, that an application will not be progressed, the applicant will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for it, and will be informed of the right to present their case to the Registrar. The decision of the Registrar will be final. Any decision by the Registrar to allow the application to be considered may include conditions.
- 28 The academic merits of the application will only be considered where the Registrar has confirmed that the application may progress.

Applicants who will be under 18 at the start of a course

- 29 There is no age restriction for the University's courses other than those where professional, statutory or regulatory bodies require students to be 18 or over (relating to professional training placements). Where an applicant who is offered a place will be under 18 at the start of their course, the University will follow a process which reflects its duty of care towards the applicant and reflects the legal limitations arising from the applicant's age.
- 30 The Registrar is responsible for making the final decision whether to admit such an applicant. Where the Professional Development Coordinator considers that such an applicant is suitable for the course in terms of their academic potential, the application **must** be referred to the Registrar. The Registrar may invite the applicant for interview if that is considered appropriate to enable the application to be considered properly. An offer may be made subject to such conditions as the Registrar considers necessary in the interests of the applicant and the University.
- 31 Where an offer of admission to the University is to be made to any applicant who will be under the age of 18 years at the start of the course, the Registrar will send a letter to the applicant enclosing a form of consent for the signature of the parent or guardian of the applicant. The letter containing the offer of admission will make it clear that any such offer is conditional upon the consent form being signed by the applicant and their parent/guardian, and being returned to the Registrar. The Registrar will only confirm the offer of admission once the form has been signed and returned.
- 32 The University's duty of care does not require the University to act *in loco parentis* for a student, however, it will act *in loco parentis* in limited circumstances, for example any dealings which a student who is under 18 may have with the police, or in the case of a medical emergency when the student might not be able to make a decision themselves. The University would only take a decision on the student's behalf in these circumstances if it were impossible or impractical to contact the student's nominated emergency contact in the available time.
- 33 If the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student aged under 18 is not resident in Gibraltar it may be necessary for them to appoint a guardian normally residing in Gibraltar and to provide details for this person and their informed consent to their acting in this capacity. Being a guardian

involves carrying out the tasks and responsibilities of the parent(s) as delegated by the student's parents. It is a private arrangement between the parent(s) and the guardian.

- 34 The University communicates directly with students and for those who are under 18 at the start of their course will only disclose information to their parents/guardian, for example about their academic progress, results or other circumstances, with the written consent of the student.

Specific entry requirements

- 35 As indicated above, the specific entry requirements for a given course are published on the University's website.
- 36 Applications based on extensive work experience will also be welcomed where this experience is relevant to the course.
- 37 In determining whether to accept a student onto a course, the University will also take into account information provided in the application, over and above the qualifications completed or being studied by the applicant

How to apply

- 38 Applicants are required to apply directly to the University using the online application process at www.unigib.edu.gi.
- 39 Information about opportunities to visit the University, either before or after making an application, will be advertised on the University's website.

Selection

- 40 In deciding whether to accept a student onto a course, the Professional Development Coordinator will look for evidence of achievement at the appropriate level as preparation for the course to which the application relates.

Checks on each application

- 41 On receiving an application, a number of checks are made: these are designed to ensure that the application meets the general entry criteria and to identify whether the applicant requires, or will require in the future, individual support. Support may relate to the application process (for example in relation to attending an interview) and/or the learning, teaching and assessment of the course. The criteria to which these checks relate are indicated in more detail in the 'general entry requirements' section above and relate to applicants:

- (a) with a disability or learning difficulties
- (b) who are pregnant or in maternity
- (c) who declare a criminal conviction
- (d) will be under 18 at the commencement of the course
- (e) have previously studied at the University

Accuracy of applicant information

False or misleading information

- 42 Where there is evidence that an applicant may have provided false or misleading information the Registrar will conduct an investigation to determine whether the applicant has been guilty of deliberate misrepresentation. Misrepresentation may relate to the information being provided in an attempt to obtain by deception:
- (a) a place on the course
 - (b) financial status (as a means of paying a lower fee)
- 43 False or misleading information may relate to:
- (a) qualifications
 - (b) criminal convictions
 - (c) references
 - (d) fee status
 - (e) the omission of relevant information.
- 44 The applicant will be informed in writing by the Registrar of the University's concerns and will be invited to provide a written explanation, originals of qualifications and/or to attend an interview. Where, having considered the applicant's written or oral explanation, and following consultation with the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education, the Registrar considers that the apparent misrepresentation has not been satisfactorily explained, or where no explanation has been provided, the Registrar will cancel the application and confirm this in writing to the applicant. An applicant is not permitted to appeal this decision.
- 45 If the University suspects that the application constitutes fraud – especially identity theft - it will refer the matter to the appropriate external authorities.
- 46 Where a student after enrolment is suspected of having obtained their place on the course through providing false or misleading information in their application the Registrar will instigate the above process. Where the Registrar is satisfied, following consultation with the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education, that misrepresentation has been established, the Registrar will terminate the student's course and no award qualification will be made by the University. Where the student has already been awarded a qualification, the Registrar will make a recommendation to the Academic Quality and Learning Manager that the award of the qualification be revoked.
- 47 A student whose course is terminated as specified above, may appeal in writing to the Academic Quality and Learning Manager on one or more of the following grounds only:
- (a) there was a procedural irregularity which may have affected the outcome of the decision
 - (b) the decision to terminate the course was unreasonable given the evidence available
 - (c) the availability of new evidence which could affect the outcome and which was not available when the student was invited to provide an explanation for legitimate reasons.

Personal data

- 48 In applying to the University, each applicant is required to provide personal data. Specific items of data are used in the following way:
- (a) Date of birth: for purposes of identification and to identify whether an application will be under the age of 18 at the start of the course
 - (b) Ethnicity and other equality characteristics: collected purely for purposes of data monitoring and to ensure that the University's facilities continue to be suitable for the needs of the student population; these data are not used as part of the selection decision and an applicant can choose not to provide the data.
- 49 The University will query with the applicant if there appear to be mismatches between items of personal data such as a difference in the name(s) on the application and on supporting documents such as certificates or a passport, and will require evidence of changes of name.

Outcome of the application

- 50 Having considered all the evidence, as indicated in the above paragraphs, the University (through the Professional Development Coordinator and Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education) will make one of the following decisions:
- (a) Accept the application without conditions (unconditional enrolment)
 - (b) Accept the application conditional on the outcome of certain events such as the applicant's assessment results or performance in English language tests (conditional enrolment)
 - (c) reject the application.
- 51 If the Director of Professional Development & Continuing Education considers that there is an alternative course, not necessarily leading to the same qualification, to which the applicant might be suited and for which they meet the entry requirements, the applicant may be offered a place on that alternative course following consultation with the applicant.
- 52 Applicants can normally expect to hear the outcome of their application within:
- (a) 20 days for applications determined solely on the basis of the application form (assuming there are no queries about the information in question)
 - (b) 25 days for applications determined based on additional information requested
- 53 Where a conditional enrolment is provided those conditions should be satisfied no later than two weeks before the commencement of the course unless the University specifies an alternative date and provides a reason for that date.

Enrolment

- 54 Where the University accepts an application, the following information will be provided:
- (a) how and when to enrol
 - (b) when to arrive at the University and arrangements for welcome and induction
 - (c) the Course Handbook

(d) contact details for obtaining further information or answering queries.

- 55 The applicant's full University account will be activated on enrolment.
- 56 The applicant **must** also be provided with the Terms and Conditions in a 'durable medium' (that is a pdf file which cannot be edited but which can be retained and stored by the applicant in its unaltered form). This information is also available on the University's course webpage.

Terms and conditions of enrolment

- 57 Becoming a student of the University involves entering into a legal contract with the University, and that contract contains a number of Terms and Conditions by which both parties are bound. To ensure that applicants can understand the nature of those obligations details of the Terms and Conditions are set out in a document entitled 'Terms and Conditions' which is available on the University's course webpage and is sent to applicants as part of the registration process..
- 58 An applicant who has any queries about the meaning of anything in the document should contact the University, using the contact details in the document so that clarification can be provided.
- 59 The Terms and Conditions are set out in the document: Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (PCQH:A1).

Confirmation

- 60 An enrolment which is conditional has to be 'confirmed' by the University – in other words confirming that the conditions have been satisfied. The conditional enrolment and acceptance are not therefore binding until the University confirms that the conditions have been satisfied.
- 61 The applicant will need to provide evidence that the conditions have been satisfied, such as the results of their assessments or English language test. These results may need to be verified for example by providing original evidence (translated into English where applicable) or photocopies which have been authenticated by the awarding/testing body.
- 62 Once the University is satisfied that the conditions have been met it will inform the applicant in writing that their place on the course is now confirmed.

Proof of identity

- 63 Prior to enrolment each prospective student must provide (either in person or by post) the original of an accepted form of identification for verification before they can be enrolled. In the absence of this verification, enrolment will not be completed.

Changes in circumstances

- 64 A prospective student who has an application which has been confirmed is required to notify the University of any change in their circumstances which would mean that they may no longer be eligible to study the course. Examples of such changes include being charged with a criminal offence for which the outcome of that charge is pending, or conviction of a criminal offence.

- 65 A student whose ability to study may be affected by a change in circumstances since making the application, such as the diagnosis of a long-term health condition (defined as 12 months or more) or who has been diagnosed with a disability, should contact the University to discuss their support needs. The University will follow the same procedure as if the circumstances had applied at the time of the application.

Registration as a University of Gibraltar Professional Course Student

- 66 All applicants who have been accepted onto a professional course are required to register as a professional course student of the University. This process involves completion of registration and payment of the appropriate fee, in return for access to relevant University facilities and learning and teaching resources.

Induction

- 67 The University will provide students with a welcome and induction at the start of their course, The welcome and induction is designed to:
- (a) foster a supportive environment
 - (b) give students an opportunity to meet other students, academic and support staff
 - (c) familiarise students with the relevant University's facilities
 - (d) familiarise students with the University's expectations, and the expectations which they can have of the University

Feedback to unsuccessful applicants

- 68 Where the University rejects an application, the applicant **must** be provided with clear reasons for the decision. This approach is designed to enable the applicant to understand why the application was rejected and to help them to better prepare for a future application should they wish to do so.
- 69 The University will not provide feedback to third parties, such as a school/college, parent/guardian or advisor unless a request is made in writing and is accompanied by the written authorisation of the applicant.

CHAPTER II: FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS BY APPLICANTS

- 70 The University is committed to the continuous improvement of all aspects of its management and delivery of education and related services to students and prospective students. As part of this commitment, it welcomes constructive feedback from applicants (at whatever stage their application has reached) and those who have considered the possibility of making an application and, for example, have researched the courses offered by the University.

- 71 An Applicant is any person who has submitted an application to study a professional course, whether that application results in an unconditional enrolment, a conditional enrolment which is confirmed or not confirmed or is rejected.
- 72 An applicant who lodges a complaint under this procedure will not be subject to any form of discrimination or prejudice as a result of making the complaint.

Feedback from applicants

- 73 Feedback can be about any aspect of:
- (e) the clarity and comprehensiveness of the information the University provides about its courses and qualifications, and about the process for applying for a course
 - (f) the service it provides in handling enquiries, requests for information or guidance, or in handling applications and the subsequent stages.
- 74 Feedback from applicants may be provided in person or by telephone, email or letter using the contact details indicated in the email information sent to all applicants.
- 75 The University will also seek to obtain feedback from applicants on their experience of applying both in cases where the application is accepted and where it is rejected.

Complaints by applicants

- 76 A **Complaint** is a specific concern about the quality of information provided to prospective students or the standard of service provided by the University in considering an application, whether relating to an action or a failure to act.
- 77 An applicant has the right to make a complaint relating to their experience of any stage of the application process.
- 78 Complaints will only be considered where they are made directly by the applicant concerned, or the authorised representative of an applicant. Those made by third parties on behalf of an applicant will not be considered. 'Authorised' means that the applicant has confirmed in writing that the representative may act on their behalf. Further advice and guidance on the complaints process can be sought from the Student Experience Office.

Malicious, Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints

- 79 The University will not process complaints that are deemed to be malicious, frivolous or vexatious in that they are obsessive, harassing or repetitive, abusive in tone or language, insistent on pursuing unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes, designed to cause disruption or annoyance, or demanding disproportionate redress. In such cases, the University reserves the right to terminate the process at any time.
- 80 Anonymous complaints will only be considered to the extent that the University considers that there may be something useful that can be learned from the complaint which would benefit the University, such as improving the clarity of information or procedures.

- 81 The University will not process complaints about matters which have already been, or are currently under consideration by a court or tribunal.
- 82 The University will not address a matter which constitutes the questioning of the exercise of academic judgement. In this context that means the judgement whether the applicant's qualification and/or experience are suitable for the course and/or whether the applicant has the required potential to succeed on the course.

Informal resolution

- 83 The University endeavours to resolve all complaints at the earliest opportunity and by informal means wherever possible. Applicants are encouraged to address their concerns to Course Coordinator in the first instance. Many potential complaints can be resolved for example through a member of staff providing clarification of a decision or of the reasons for the decision or other action.
- 84 Where a request for informal resolution is made (by telephone, email or letter) the Course Coordinator (or person nominated on their behalf) will provide a response no later than 15 University working days of receipt the complaint.

Formal complaint

- 85 Where an applicant feels their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved through the informal channels, they may submit a formal complaint in writing to the Registrar. This should be received within 15 University working days of being notified of the outcome.
- 86 A formal complaint **should** be submitted using the University's form available on the website or, where this form is not used, by providing the information specified on the form. The complaint should be addressed to the Registrar and **should** make clear the nature of the resolution which the applicant is seeking.
- 87 The Registrar will ensure that a fair and transparent investigation is conducted for any formal complaint received and determine the most appropriate outcome, taking into account the outcome the applicant requested in submitting the complaint. The Registrar may request further information from the applicant.
- 88 The Registrar will, within 14 working days of receipt of the complaint, provide a written response on the findings and decision, the reasons for the decision and any actions which will be taken. In the event of a delay, the applicant will be informed of the new deadline and why it is needed.
- 89 The notification of the decision will also make clear that the decision is final and not subject to further review within the University and **must** also advise the student of their right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome. The communication constitutes confirmation of the 'Completion of University Procedures' by the student and **must** include the text agreed jointly by the University and the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman.

- 90 Documentation relating to complaints will be retained as part of the University's records, however, where the applicant is admitted to a University course, the details of the complaint will not form part of their student record.
- 91 An applicant who lodges a complaint under this procedure will not be subject to any form of discrimination or prejudice as a result of making the complaint.

Recording and monitoring of complaints

- 92 The University will maintain a record of all formal and informal complaints received from applicants, and the outcomes reached in each case to enable the University to monitor issues raised as the basis for improvement. The University will record demographic data including the age, gender and ethnicity of the applicants concerned, and report to the University Executive each year on trends and lessons learned.

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