University Code of Practice

Recruitment, Selection and Admission (Taught Programmes)

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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 taught programmes and applies up to the point at which a prospective student is enrolled on a programme. It sets out the University's commitment to abide by the principles of 'fair admission' (specifically the 'Schwartz principles' set out in the report of that name published in 2004) and its commitment to equal opportunities. Applications for admission to a University programme will be considered only based on whether the applicant meets the University's entry requirements (general and those specific to the programme). 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 Programme Coordinator regarding whether the applicant meets the specific entry requirements for the programme; the final say over admission rests with the Registrar regarding whether the applicant meets the general entry criteria especially regarding such matters as criminal convictions (which are not an automatic bar to entry).

The Code details (in chapter I):

- information which potential applicants need to know before applying
- the general entry requirements (specific entry requirements will be published in each programme specification)
- 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 it 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 appeal and/or complaint, adopting a similar approach to the rights of enrolled students. Appeals and complaints are the responsibility of the Head 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.

Chapter II also provides that if an applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal or complaint they have the right to take the matter to the Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman. The communication informing them of the outcome of the VC's review must include agreed text advising them of that right and directing them to further information about how to progress the matter.

This Code references two related documents which are central to the admission of students:

- Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2)
- Code on Student Protection (QH:E3).

The admission of students to research degrees is addressed in the Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) – chapter II.

Further Guidance

See the Introduction to the Quality Handbook (QH:A1) for further guidance and explanations of:

- how the Handbook is designed to work and what it covers and does not cover
- how it is structured
- the 'external reference points' and established practice which have informed each of the Codes
- key concepts and themes
- some suggestions for further reading
- a quick guide to each Code, including definitions and things to watch out for.

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 Academic Quality and Standards Committee is the final arbiter of the application and interpretation of this code of practice.

Scope of the Code

2 This Code applies to programmes classified by Academic Board as taught and which lead to the award of the University's higher education qualifications (as set out in the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1)).

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 programme leading to a higher education qualification – termed 'prospective students' - and which are designed to help them make informed decisions about whether they wish to apply for a programme and, if so, which programme
(b) the process of making an application for a programme
(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 at which they accept an offer to the point at which they formally enrol at the University and commence their programme.

4 This Code includes appeals and complaints by applicants in respect of the decision regarding their admission, and addresses decisions relating to the recognition of prior learning where that learning is sought to be used to meet, or partially meet, the University's entry requirements for a specific programme. The recognition of prior learning over and above meeting the entry requirements is addressed in the Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4).

5 Arrangements applying to students following enrolment are set out in other University Codes and principally the Academic Regulations: Taught Programmes (QH:C1).

6 The procedures in this Code do not apply to students wishing to transfer from one University programme to another or wishing to change mode of study (for example from full- to part-time).

Application to collaborative provision

7 Unless specified by the Academic Board, 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

8 The University is committed to the highest standards of fairness and integrity in conducting all activities relating to Recruitment, Selection and Admission. Specifically, this commitment involves abiding by the 'Principles of Fair Admission' set out in the report known as the Schwartz Report - *Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice* (2004) – and fully endorsed in the UK Quality Code (2014) chapter B2. These principles, which are now known as the Schwartz principles state that a fair admissions system should:

(a) be transparent
(b) enable higher education providers to select students who are able to complete the programme as judged by their achievements and their potential
(c) strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid
(d) seek to minimise barriers for prospective students
(e) be professional in every respect and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes.

Equal opportunities

9 The University's commitment set out above, 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 programme.

10 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.

Reasonable adjustments

11 Enquirers and applicants requiring individual assistance in obtaining information to help them make an informed decision about applying for a programme, and requiring assistance in making an application (including – where applicable – visiting the University, attending for interview) are encouraged to contact the University at seo@unigib.edu.gi indicating their needs.

CHAPTER I: THE RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND ADMISSION PROCESS

Who decides?

12 Responsibility for the Recruitment, Selection and Admission process rests with the Registrar, who reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The Registrar may delegate these responsibilities[1].

13 Decisions about selection – whether to make an offer to an applicant for a place on a university programme – are made by the Programme Coordinator subject to final oversight by the Registrar. The Programme Coordinator is responsible for determining the suitability of the applicant for the programme in terms of their academic ability and likely commitment to the programme, and therefore their potential to succeed on the programme. The Programme Coordinator may delegate these responsibilities[1]. The Registrar 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 programme and applicants with criminal convictions. The Registrar therefore has the final say on the decision whether to make an offer.

Before applying

Deadlines for applying

14 The University publishes the deadlines for applying for each programme on its website. In exceptional circumstances an application for a programme may be accepted once the deadline for that programme has passed. The final authority on whether a late application will be accepted rests with the Registrar; but in any event a late applicant will not be accepted after missing an assessment or other non-recoverable component of the programme, nor after more than two weeks after the commencement of the programme. A late applicant will be provided with advice about the possibility of applying for a future intake of the programme.

Applications for new programmes

15 A new programme may be advertised before it has received final approval (under the Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2)) provided that all advertising makes explicit that the programme has not received final approval and may therefore either not be approved or be subject to amendments.

16 Applications for a new programme **must** not be considered (and therefore no offers made) until the programme has received final approval (including the fulfilment of any conditions).

[1] Where Registrar responsibility is delegated, a record must be kept of the responsibility delegated and to whom, the delegate must sign off business conducted on behalf of the responsible officer, and a summary of the foregoing reported to the QEC.

Number of places available

17 The University places a limit on the number of places available for each programme (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 programme is externally funded or regulated. The University also works to a target for the total student population.

18 Only where the number of applications exceeds the number of places available will the University resort to any form of ranking of applicants to select the best-qualified applicants. In all cases applications are given serious consideration against the published entry requirements. There are no quotas reserved for students from any particular background.

Application and other fees

19 Where the University charges a fee for making an application that fee will be published on the University website and in any information relating to applying for the programme.

20 Tuition fees for each programme are subject to approval by the Board of Governors. Information relating to each programme will make explicit to potential applicants the tuition fees, and any additional fees or costs involved in undertaking the programme (such as for placements, field trips, or equipment which students are required to purchase before or during the programme). See further Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2).

General entry requirements

21 To be admitted to a programme leading to the award of a higher education qualification an applicant must satisfy:

(a) the University's requirements for admission to the University, and
(b) such entry requirements as are specified for the particular programme.

22 The following paragraphs set out those general entry requirements. The specific entry requirements for each programme are published in the programme specification on the website along with the details of the programme.

Re-admission of former students

23 Former students/graduates are encouraged to apply to upgrade an existing qualification, for example applying for a Master's degree having completed a Bachelor's, or applying for a PhD having completed a Master's. However, former students and graduates of the University may not apply for a programme in the same or a closely related subject where they have already achieved that qualification. Former students and graduates of other universities who have achieved the same or a similar qualification in a closely related subject will be reviewed on case-by-case basis.

24 Former students of the University who failed a programme will not be permitted to reapply for the same or a closely related programme or a qualification at a lower level than that

offered by that programme. For example, a student who failed a Master's degree could not then apply for the Postgraduate Certificate in the same subject.

25 Former students whose programme was terminated as a result of a proven offence of academic misconduct under the Code on Academic Misconduct (QH:C7) or of research misconduct under the Academic Regulations: Research Degrees (QH:D1) will not be admitted to another programme of the University other than in very exceptional circumstances as determined by the Vice-Chancellor following consultation with the Head of Academic Quality and Learning and Registrar.

Acceptable A level subjects

26 The University recognises all A-level subjects, including General Studies and Critical Thinking, for the purposes of general entry requirements but individual degree programmes may require specific previous subject knowledge to A-level (or equivalent standard). General Studies/Critical Thinking A-levels can only be excluded from an offer if there are professional body requirements for entry to the programme that implicitly or explicitly preclude this. Where an applicant has not studied a prescribed subject to A-level standard for good reason other evidence may be considered. The University accepts A-level or other qualifications that are an examination for the student's own first language (e.g. A-level Chinese presented by a Chinese applicant) as long as other requirements are fulfilled.

English language proficiency

27 The University's programmes are delivered and assessed in English (with the exception of some modules within programmes designed for language learning). All applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate appropriate evidence of English Language proficiency through an acceptable test. This is normally benchmarked against IELTS (academic test 6.5 including a minimum of 6.0 in all sub-tests). Where a higher standard is required for entry to the chosen degree this will be published in the programme specification.

Disabilities

28 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 which programme 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).

29 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 academic programme, this will also be taken with full discussion with the applicant and any possible alternatives considered.

30 Where a prospective student with a disability applies and is offered a place, 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 that they will encounter. (See the Code on Assessment Procedures (QH:C6)).

Pregnancy and maternity

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

Criminal convictions

32 The University has a duty of care to the whole University population and therefore anyone who applies for admission to a University programme 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 undertake a period of study overseas or to join a professional body.

33 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 programme 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

34 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. Where the programme involves professional recognition or a right to practise a profession the University will consult with the relevant body and abide by any conditions which that body may set either generally or in respect of an individual case.

35 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.

36 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.

37 Where the Registrar 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 a panel appointed by the Vice-Chancellor to consider such further evidence that the applicant wishes to present. The decision of the panel will be final. Any decision by the Registrar or the panel to allow the application to be considered may include conditions.

38 The academic merits of the application will only be considered where the Registrar or the panel have confirmed that the application may progress.

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

39 There is no age restriction for the University's programmes 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 programme, 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.

40 The Registrar is responsible for making the final decision whether to admit such an applicant. Where the Programme Coordinator considers that such an applicant is suitable for the programme 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.

41 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 programme, 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.

42 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.

43 If the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student aged under 18 is not resident in Gibraltar or not resident within commutable distance in Spain, 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.

44 The University communicates directly with students and for those who are under 18 at the start of their programme 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

45 As indicated above the specific entry requirements are published in the programme specification on the University's website and will relate to the subject area of the programme and its level. For example, entry to a postgraduate qualification will typically require evidence of a related Bachelor's degree (usually First or Upper Second).

46 For both Bachelor's and Postgraduate qualifications, a good level of Mathematics and English (GCSE Grade 5 or equivalent).

47 Applications based on extensive work experience will also be welcomed where this experience is relevant to the programme.

48 In determining whether to make an offer, the University will also take into account information provided in the application, over and above the qualifications completed or being studied by the applicant. Account will be taken of the applicant's personal statement, reference(s), and, in appropriate cases, performance at interview or similar selection activity. Being able to meet the published qualification requirements for the programme does not therefore guarantee that an offer will be made.

Credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning

49 The University welcomes applications which are based on, or include a request for, credit transfer or prior learning (whether certificated learning or that based on prior learning from experience, such as in the work-place).

50 Where the credit or prior learning is relevant to the application for admission to the programme, information should be provided on the application form, including the nature, level and dates of any award. In the case of prior learning from experience, details should be provided of the experience and this **must** include what the applicant has learned from this experience and how that learning relates to meeting the entry requirements for the programme.

51 Applicants with prior learning, especially learning from experience, are encouraged to contact the University to seek advice on the relevance, currency and sufficiency of their learning, and the supporting evidence required, before submitting their application.

52 Where the applicant has appropriate credit or prior learning which could meet the requirements of part of the programme (over and above meeting the entry requirements) that claim will be considered under the Code on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning (QH:C4). Applicants should apply for recognition of that learning *only* after they have been made an offer of a place on the programme.

How to apply

53 Applicants are required to apply directly to the University using the online application process at www.unigib.edu.gi.

54 Information about opportunities to visit the University, either before or after making an application, will be advertised on the University's website.

Selection

55 In deciding whether to make an offer the Programme Coordinator will look for evidence of achievement at the appropriate level as preparation for the programme to which the application relates, demonstrated through previous studies; plus, potential to benefit from university-level studies and to contribute to university life. In general, previous and recent qualifications provide a significant indicator of a student's ability to meet the academic rigour of a university programme but achievement and potential can be evidenced in many different ways. As indicated earlier in this Code the University is committed to ensuring that its decision-making is transparent and all applicants are treated on an equal and fair basis.

Checks on each application

56 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 programme. 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 programme
(e) have previously studied at the University
(f) who are applying for the recognition of prior learning.

Tuition fee assessment

57 An assessment will also be made as to whether the applicant is entitled to pay tuition fees at the home or at the international rate.

Deferral

58 An applicant may apply to begin the programme up to one year later than the next start date. Allowing such deferral is at the discretion of the University, but apart from the fact of deferral the application will be judged entirely on its merits as set out in this Code. Where an offer is subsequently made for that deferred entry the University will contact the applicant prior to the following year's entry to seek confirmation that the applicant still intends to take up a place.

Sources of evidence

59 In making the selection decision one or more of the following will be used, as indicated in the published programme specification and supporting information:

(a) actual and predicted examination/assessment results
(b) personal statements
(c) references
(d) interviews
(e) entry tests.

60 The University regards actual and/or predicted grades as an important indicator of an applicant's academic potential and whether they are capable of achieving the standards required for the programme. However, the University understands that predicted grades are not always completely accurate and some students develop significantly in the final stages of their A-level or equivalent courses. Personal statements and references therefore also play an important role in enabling a proper evaluation of the applicant's potential. Only those qualifications and subjects identified in the application will be considered in determining the application.

61 Personal statements provide an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, their commitment to the programme to which they are applying, their interests, and to identify any barriers they have overcome in undertaking their studies. An application without a personal statement, or with a very short personal statement, will not normally be considered.

62 References provide an external source of evidence of the applicant's suitability. A minimum of one reference is required. Where more than one is required – typically for professional programmes – this will be stated in the published programme specification. Exceptionally the University may request a second reference where it considers that the reference provided is in some way insufficient. References must be recent, signed by the referee and on the reference form provided, preferably with a business stamp attached, or on business letterhead paper and containing the referee's full contact address. References will not be accepted from an applicant's friend or family member. The University may contact a referee at any time to confirm details of a reference or to ask for clarification.

63 For some programmes it is appropriate to invite applicants to an interview (whether individual or group) or to set some form of entry test. Where this is the case, information about the nature of the interview or test will be provided in the programme specification published before applications are made, and applicants considered potentially suitable will be sent an invitation with further details about the process and its objectives.

64 Typically applicants for every programme are interviewed. However, where a programme does not normally use an interview, an applicant might be invited for interview where the Programme Coordinator or Registrar considers that the information contained in the application is not sufficient or clear. Details of the purpose of the interview will be provided along with the invitation.

Accuracy of applicant information

False or misleading information

65 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 programme
(b) financial status (as a means of paying a lower fee)
(c) entry to the country.

66 False or misleading information may relate to:

(a) qualifications
(b) criminal convictions
(c) references
(d) fee status
(e) the omission of relevant information.

67 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 Vice-Chancellor, 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.

68 If the University suspects that the application constitutes fraud – especially identity theft - it will refer the matter to the external appropriate authorities.

69 Where a student after enrolment is suspected of having obtained their place on the programme 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 Vice-Chancellor, that misrepresentation has been established, the Registrar will terminate the student's programme and no award of credit or a qualification will be made by the University. Where the student has already been awarded credit or a qualification, the Registrar will make a recommendation to the Academic Board that the award of the credit or qualification be revoked.

70 A student whose programme is terminated as specified above, may appeal in writing to the Vice-Chancellor 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 programme 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

71 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 programme (see paras. 39 onwards)
(b) Nationality: for purposes of assessing whether the applicant is liable for the home or the international tuition fee and for whether the applicant will require permission to enter Gibraltar
(c) 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.

72 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

73 Having considered all the evidence, as indicated in the above paragraphs, the University (through the Programme Coordinator and Registrar) will make one of the following decisions:

(a) offer a place without conditions (unconditional offer)
(b) offer a place conditional on the outcome of certain events such as the applicant's assessment results or performance in English language tests (conditional offer)
(c) reject the application.

74 If the Registrar considers that there is an alternative programme, 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 programme following consultation with the applicant.

75 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 selection activities such as interviews (assuming there are no queries about the information in question).

76 Where a conditional offer is made those conditions should be satisfied no later than two weeks before the commencement of the programme unless the University specifies an alternative date and provides a reason for that date.

The offer

77 Where the University makes an offer, and the applicant accepts the offer, they will be provided with the following information which will enable the applicant to access information about:

(a) how and when to enrol
(b) when to arrive at the University and arrangements for welcome and induction
(c) the programme, including the programme specification and module descriptors, reading lists, and any other programme specific materials
(d) the obligations of being a student, including the rules governing progression and award and the University's Code on Academic Misconduct
(e) contact details for obtaining further information or answering queries.

78 The applicant's full University account will be activated on enrolment.

79 The applicant **must** also be provided with the Terms and Conditions (para. 80) 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 website.

Terms and conditions of the offer

80 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 website and is sent to applicants with the offer.

81 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.

82 The Terms and Conditions are set out in the document: Student Contract – Terms and Conditions (QH:E2).

Changes to the programme – Code on Student Protection

83 As indicated in the Terms and Conditions, the University makes changes to its programmes as part of its ongoing commitment to securing academic standards and enhancing the quality of students' learning opportunities. It has published procedures for making changes and rules which determine what happens if such changes will affect current students or those to whom an offer of a place has been made which has not been rejected – see the Code on Programme Approval (QH:C2). The University has also adopted the practice of UK universities in developing a Code on Student Protection. This Code sets out how the University will protect the interests of students in certain situations such as the closure of a programme or when making major changes to a programme. See further the Code on Student Protection (QH:E3).

84 In summary, the Code on Student Protection provides that the University will not make major changes to a programme that will apply to current or prospective students unless the written

agreement of those students has been obtained. The University will also not withdraw a programme where that withdrawal will affect current or prospective students. Prospective students in this case means those to whom an offer has been made and who have not rejected that offer.

Accepting an offer

85 Offers should normally be accepted within 10 working days. Offers should normally be accepted within 10 working days. The University cannot guarantee the offer of a place if acceptance has not been received by the deadline or a request made to the registrar for an extension to the deadline.

Confirmation

86 An offer which is conditional has to be 'confirmed' by the University – in other words confirming that the conditions have been satisfied. The conditional offer and acceptance are not therefore binding until the University confirms that the conditions have been satisfied.

87 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.

88 Once the University is satisfied that the conditions have been met it will inform the applicant in writing that their place on the programme is now confirmed.

Proof of identity

89 Prior to or at 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

90 A prospective student who has accepted an offer 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 programme. 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.

91 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 Student

92 Students will typically be admitted to the programme at the beginning of each academic year unless, for a particular programme, an alternative intake date is specified.

93 All applicants who have accepted the offer of a place are required to register as a student of the University prior to the commencement of the programme. This process involves completion of registration formalities and payment of the appropriate fee, in return for access to the University's facilities and learning and teaching resources. Late registration due to extenuating circumstances may be permitted at the discretion of the Registrar; but late registration will not be permitted after missing an assessment or other non-recoverable component of the programme, nor after more than two weeks after the commencement of the programme.

94 Subject to satisfactory progress, students are required to re-register on the anniversary of their first registration or other date as directed by the University, including paying the tuition fees notified as part of the Terms and Conditions of the contract. Students who have not paid their tuition fees will be deemed to be a debtor of the University of Gibraltar and will not be entitled access to the University's facilities or to their supervisory team.

Induction

95 The University will provide students with a welcome and induction programme at the start of their programme, details of which will be sent to each student along with the details of how to enrol. The welcome and induction programme 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 University's facilities
(d) familiarise students with the University's expectations, and the expectations which they can have of the University

96 The induction programme will include presentations and informal discussions as well as a tour of the facilities.

Feedback to unsuccessful applicants

97 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.

98 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.

Applicant's right of appeal

99 As part of the University's commitment to a fair and transparent recruitment, selection and admission process, unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal against the University's decision to reject their application under the grounds and procedures outlined below.

100 An **Appeal** by an applicant is a request to formally review the outcome of an application for admission to the University, or the conditions of an offer.

101 An applicant who submits an appeal under this procedure will not subsequently be subject to any form of discrimination or prejudice as a result of their request.

Grounds for Appeal

102 Applicants who are dissatisfied with the feedback and reasons provided for the University's decision may submit an appeal to the Head of Academic Quality and Learning if they can demonstrate that:

(a) there has been a significant procedural irregularity (including administrative error) by the University which could have affected the outcome of the application
(b) that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the decision was influenced by prejudice or bias or lack of proper consideration on the part of one or more of the decision-makers
(c) there is relevant and material information which could not be provided with the application for understandable reasons.

103 An appeal may result in the outcome of the application being changed where there is evidence of applicable grounds.

104 An appeal must be submitted within 25 University working days of the applicant being notified of the outcome of the University's decision on their application.

105 In exceptional circumstances the University will consider requests after this deadline where the applicant provides understandable reasons for the longer period being required.

106 The appeal should be addressed to the Head of Academic Quality and Learning stating which of the above-mentioned grounds apply.

107 Appeals 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.

108 The Head of Academic Quality and Learning will ensure that a fair and transparent investigation into the matter is conducted.

Outcomes on Appeals

109 Upon completion of the investigation the Head of Academic Quality and Learning will, within 15 University working days of receiving the appeal, provide the applicant with a written

response on the findings and decision. This notification 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.

110 If the Head of Academic Quality and Learning determines that the appeal should be upheld they will direct that the application be reconsidered, adjusted to take account of the basis for the appeal.

111 Documentation relating to appeals will be retained as part of the University's records, however, where the applicant is admitted to a University programme, the details of the appeal will not form part of their student record.

112 An applicant who lodges an appeal under this procedure will not be subject to any form of discrimination or prejudice as a result of making the appeal.

Recording and monitoring of appeals

113 The University will maintain a record of all formal appeals 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 Academic Board each year on trends and lessons learned.

CHAPTER II: FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS BY APPLICANTS

114 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 programmes offered by the University.

115 An Applicant is any person who has submitted an application to study a programme leading to a higher education qualification, whether that application results in an unconditional offer, a conditional offer which is confirmed or not confirmed or is rejected.

116 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

117 Feedback can be about any aspect of:

(d) the clarity and comprehensiveness of the information the University provides about its programmes and qualifications, and about the process for applying for a programme
(e) the service it provides in handling enquiries, requests for information or guidance, or in handling applications and the subsequent stages.

118 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.

119 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

120 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.

121 An applicant has the right to make a complaint relating to their experience of any stage of the application process.

122 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 Student Services.

Malicious, Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints

123 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.

124 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.

125 The University will not process complaints about matters which have already been, or are currently under consideration by a court or tribunal.

126 An applicant may submit both an appeal and a complaint. Only an appeal may result in the outcome of the application being changed but a complaint may result in the University making changes to its procedures or addressing related issues such as staff development. However, an applicant may be advised to re-classify an appeal as a complaint or vice versa, or the University may decide to re-classify with the consent of the applicant, so that the most appropriate approach is taken to seeking to resolve the matter satisfactorily.

127 Whether the matter is progressed as an appeal or a complaint, 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 programme and/or whether the applicant has the required potential to succeed on the programme.

Informal resolution

128 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 the Programme Coordinator in the first instance. Many potential appeals or 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.

129 Where a request for informal resolution is made (by telephone, email or letter) the Programme Coordinator (or person nominated on their behalf) will provide a response no later than 15 University working days of receipt the complaint.

Formal complaint

130 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.

131 A formal complaint submitted to the Registrar **should** also make clear the nature of the resolution which the applicant is seeking.

132 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.

133 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.

134 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.

135 Documentation relating to complaints will be retained as part of the University's records, however, where the applicant is admitted to a University programme, the details of the complaint will not form part of their student record.

136 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

137 The University will maintain a record of all formal 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 Academic Board each year on trends and lessons learned.

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