



# QA Higher Education Admissions Policy Framework Version 1.0



<b>Document version</b>	<b>Last updated</b>	<b>Updated by</b>	<b>Date of next review</b>
Version 1.0	14/06/19	Rosalind Martin	October 2019



## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Ownership
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Staff training
  - a. QAHE specific training
  - b. Training to be provided by partner institutions
6. Equality and Diversity
7. Admissions Process
  - a. Application routes
  - b. Application deadlines
  - c. Communicating decisions and feedback
  - d. CAS request and issuance
8. Entry Requirements
  - a. Academic requirements
  - b. Assessing English language requirements
  - c. Assessing other qualifications and experience
  - d. Admissions Interviews
  - e. Advanced entry
9. Documents required to make an offer
  - a. Conditional offer – minimum requirements
  - b. Unconditional offer
10. Dealing with Incomplete Applications
11. Assessing Applications
  - a. Fee status
  - b. Academic assessment
  - c. English language assessment
  - d. Personal Statements
  - e. References
  - f. Interviews
  - g. Immigration specific requirements
    - i. Academic progression
    - ii. Immigration history
    - iii. Study limit under Tier 4
    - iv. Pre-CAS interviews
  - h. Financial ability
12. Other Specific Applicant Groups
  - a. Widening participation
  - b. Care leavers
  - c. Under 18's – Safeguarding Policy
  - d. Mature applicants
  - e. Applicants with disabilities
  - f. Applicants with criminal convictions
13. Unsuccessful Applications
14. Offer to Alternative Course
15. Changes to and Discontinuation of Programmes
16. Deferral Policy



17. Multiple Applications and Re-applications
18. Students Seeking to Transfer from another UK Higher Education Institution
19. Readmissions Policy
20. Fraudulent Applications and Documents
21. Withdrawal of Offer
22. Acceptance of offers and deposits
23. Cancellation Rights
24. Refunds policy
25. Complaints Procedure
26. Personal Data / GDPR
  - a. Prospective enquirers
  - b. Prospective applicants

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** Specific Admissions Processes agreed with Ulster University

**Appendix 2** Specific Admissions Processes agreed with Northumbria University

**Appendix 3** Specific Admissions Processes agreed with Solent University, Southampton (Pathway College & main campus admissions)

**Appendix 4** Specific Admissions Processes agreed with Solent University, Southampton (Branch Campus admissions)

**Appendix 5** Specific Admissions Processes agreed with University of Roehampton

**Appendix 6** Specific Admissions Processes agreed with Middlesex University



## 1. Introduction

QA Higher Education (QAHE) offers a range of courses in partnership with a number of UK Universities, and is committed to making university education a viable option for a diverse cohort of students.

QAHE is also committed to operating admissions procedures that are fair, transparent and consistent, and compliant with all relevant legislation and regulations. We aim to admit only suitably qualified applicants who have the ability to complete their programme of study successfully.

In support of these commitments, QAHE adheres to a number of policies and procedures of which this Admissions Policy Framework forms a key part. Relevant policies include:

- Student Recruitment Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Competition & Markets Authority (CMA) Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Accommodation Policy

## 2. Purpose

This Admissions Policy Framework is intended for the use of QAHE staff involved in recruitment and admissions to ensure a consistent and superior customer journey for all applicants. It aims to provide information on the authority and responsibilities of those involved in the process, staff and applicants, and outlines how any disputes will be resolved.

## 3. Ownership

The Admissions Policy Framework is owned by the Head of Admissions with oversight from the Marketing and Recruitment Director. It is the responsibility of the Head of Admissions to review this document ahead of the main admissions cycle in conjunction with relevant counterparts within each of QAHE's partner institutions.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The QAHE Admissions team works closely with colleagues within QAHE and key staff across the partner institutions to deliver a professional and equitable admissions service.

The QAHE Admissions team is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a fair, transparent and efficient admissions service is delivered to all applicants
- Liaising with partner institutions in relation to the admissions processes and applicants
- Decision making for partner institutions where this has been delegated to QAHE in conjunction with detailed admissions criteria as agreed with each partner institution, and outlined in Appendices 1-6



- Processing and communicating all formal admissions decisions to applicants where this has been delegated to QAHE Admissions Office (see Appendices 1-6)
- Keeping academic and admissions colleagues in each of the partner institutions informed about offers made to applicants in line with agreed admissions criteria
- Requesting Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) from respective partner institutions, where required, to allow international applicants to apply for their visa to study in the UK
- Carrying out a fee assessment of applicants, where applicable
- Safeguarding QAHE and partner institutions from fraudulent applicants
- Compliance with internal and external regulations including in relation to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), fee status, Academic technology Approval Scheme (ATAS), data protection, CMA policy and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where applicable.

Admissions staff of partner institutions are responsible for:

- Providing QAHE staff with clear documented guidance on all entry criteria against which applicants will be assessed for an offer
- Ensuring that QAHE staff are kept up to date on changes to any admissions criteria, processes or courses and associated Terms and Conditions
- Informing QAHE staff of all relevant deadlines in advance of each admissions cycle.
- Processing and communicating all formal admissions decisions to QAHE in line with agreed service standards and confirming decisions to applicants directly where this has not been delegated to QAHE Admissions Office (see Appendices 1-6)
- Providing QAHE staff with template offer letters and templates for any communications sent to applicants on behalf of the partner institution, as required
- Providing QAHE staff with University terms and conditions of offer, and where required, liaising with QAHE to agree amendments to these terms and conditions
- Responding to QAHE queries and admissions decisions requests in line with agreed service standards, as outlined in each of the relevant Appendices
- Notifying QAHE Admissions where direct applications have been received via UCAS or direct to the institution or any other applications received via systems which QAHE do not have access to within agreed service standards as outlined in Appendices 1-6
- Carrying out a fee assessment where this has not been delegated to QAHE staff
- Issuing Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to allow international applicants to apply for their Tier 4 visa in line with agreed service standards.

## **5. Staff Training**

### **a. QAHE specific training**

QAHE is responsible for identifying and addressing the training needs of QAHE Admissions team in relation to the use of the internal IT systems through which



applicants are processed. QAHE is also responsible for ensuring that Admissions staff have access to any external training necessary to ensure their knowledge and experience of relevant legislation is up-to-date.

#### **b. Training to be provided by partner institutions**

Partner institutions are responsible for providing appropriate training for QAHE Admissions staff in relation to their own Student Records systems and in-house processes as well as any institutional specific training regarding local interpretation of relevant legislation, including Tier 4 immigration legislation and tuition fee regulations.

It is important that the training needs of QAHE staff are reviewed regularly and any gaps identified by QAHE are addressed by the partner institution to ensure the accurate and efficient implementation of this policy framework.

### **6. Equality and Diversity**

QAHE is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of its community, including those that seek to apply for admissions, are treated with respect and dignity. We aim to create a culture of diversity within our community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

QAHE is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
- Gender (including gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity)
- Religion, belief
- Sexual orientation (including civil partnership status)

The above is applicable to all applicants, students and staff. In addition, QAHE staff will adhere to the relevant Equality and Diversity policies of each partner institution when processing their applications as referenced in Appendices 1-6.

### **7. Admissions Process**

#### **a. Application routes**

Applicants may choose to apply for a course offered by QAHE through a number of routes, depending on the course and the respective partner institution. Applications may be submitted via UCAS, as a paper application direct to QAHE or using online application forms available via the relevant partner institution.

#### **b. Application deadlines**

Application deadlines, where applicable, are clearly stated on the course information pages. Applications received after any stated deadlines will normally be processed in relation to the next potential intake for that course.

#### **c. Communicating decisions and feedback**

For courses delivered by QAHE, the QAHE Admissions team works to process an application and communicate an initial decision to the applicant within 2 working days from receipt of a complete application. Where an application is more



complex or requires input from academic staff at QAHE or the respective partner institution, decisions will normally be communicated to the applicant within 5 working days.

Where QAHE process applications for study at a partner institution main campus, the QAHE Admissions team aims to communicate an initial decision to the applicant within 10 working days.

#### **d. CAS request and issuance**

Once an applicant has met all outstanding conditions, accepted their offer and paid their deposit, the QAHE Admissions team will request a CAS from the relevant partner institution on behalf of the applicant. This process may require the applicant to submit copies of their financial evidence for assessment. Provided all requirements are met, the CAS will normally be issued to the applicant within 2 working days.

### **8. Entry Requirements**

#### **a. Academic requirements**

Academic entry requirements for each course are detailed in the relevant course information pages online at [www.qahighereducation.com](http://www.qahighereducation.com). Where an applicant presents qualifications which are not contained in the documented criteria received from partner institutions, QAHE Admissions staff will use UK NARIC to determine the equivalence of any overseas qualifications presented and clarify with the respective partner institution that it is acceptable.

Applicants who present historical qualifications (completed more than 5 years earlier) may take longer than the standard 5 working days to process.

Partner institutions will make the final decision on the acceptability of all qualifications.

#### **b. Assessing English language requirements**

If English is not the applicant's first language, he/she will normally be required to show evidence of his/her English ability prior to an unconditional offer being issued. It is the responsibility of the Admissions team dealing with the application to check whether or not the applicant has met this requirement in line with accepted qualifications for each of the partner institutions.

#### **c. Assessing other qualifications and experience**

QAHE encourages applications from all educational backgrounds including those without traditional academic qualifications. In line with agreed admissions criteria with partner institutions, applicants may also be considered on the basis of their knowledge, skills and potential academic ability as demonstrated through non-standard qualifications, professional qualifications and work experience. In such cases, the requirement to meet the stated academic entry requirements may be waived. QAHE Admissions staff will be required to confirm details of non-standard or professional qualifications and relevant work experience with named referees and other professional bodies, as applicable. Where detailed in the relevant Appendix, such decisions will be referred to the respective partner institution before confirmation of an unconditional offer.



All applicants wishing to be assessed on the basis of work experience in lieu of academic qualifications will need to supply at least one satisfactory reference which QAHE staff will verify directly with the named referee.

**d. Admissions / academic interviews**

QAHE may require any applicant (including standard, non-standard and advanced entry applications) to undergo an admissions interview and/or test as part of the admissions process. In particular, QAHE may choose to invite a candidate for an academic interview and/or admissions test where the applicant does not hold formal academic qualifications required but is being assessed on the basis of non-standard qualifications, relevant experience or professional qualifications.

**e. Advanced entry**

It is also possible for prior learning and experience to be considered as a basis for advanced entry onto a programme. If applicants have completed prior qualifications and/or training where the award obtained is at higher than the entry requirements then advanced entry may be considered. QAHE Admissions staff will refer applications for advanced entry to the relevant Admissions staff at the relevant partner institution for consideration. Partner institutions make the final decision on offers for advanced entry.

**9. Documents Required to Make an Offer**

**a. Conditional offer**

In order for an application to be processed and considered for a conditional offer by QAHE Admissions staff, it must contain the following:

- Fully completed application form including personal statement, where required
- Detailed educational history, outlining all qualifications still outstanding as well as those already completed along with supporting documents
- Detailed work history, where applicable
- UK immigration history, where applicable, supported by copies of the relevant documents
- Copy of passport or ID document

Appendices 1-6 also outline where the information required by each partner institution differs from the above list, before a conditional offer can be issued.

**b. Unconditional offer**

In order for an application to be processed and considered for an unconditional offer the following information and documents must be submitted to QAHE:

- Copies of all relevant academic and English language qualifications
- Any other information and documents as listed in the conditional offer. This may include: a satisfactory personal statement by the applicant; immigration history questionnaire; criminal convictions declaration; academic and/or work related references (where relevant); fee assessment questionnaire (where relevant); and financial evidence.

Verification of qualifications may be undertaken at various stages in the admissions / enrolment process as outlined in Appendices 1-6.





## **10. Dealing with Incomplete Applications**

Applications which are deemed to be incomplete, and therefore are ineligible to meet the minimum requirements for a conditional offer to be issued, will not be processed by QAHE. Such applications will be returned to the applicant / agent / QAHE Recruitment Officer along with information regarding the documents required for the application to be processed.

This information will be collated and submitted to the Agent Compliance Manager to be included in the review of agents. A monthly report of Agent compliance is provided to QAHE Senior Management and any major concerns will be addressed at this point.

## **11. Assessing Applications**

### **a. Fee status**

All applicants will be classified as Home/EU or International for fee purposes in line with the criteria outlined by the relevant fees legislations and guidance. Upon receipt of an application to study a course at QAHE, a set of government rules will be applied to assess whether the applicant meets the criteria to be classed as a Home/EU or international student. Where the information provided does not allow a decision to be made, the applicant will be informed of this and asked to complete the tuition fee assessment process and to provide additional documents. Where available, this will be a partner specific fees assessment questionnaire.

An applicant may appeal to the Head of Admissions against their tuition fee classification and where appropriate this will be referred back to the relevant partner institution. Such appeals will be considered in a timely manner, with a view to providing a response within 5 working days of the written appeal being submitted to the Head of Admissions. Where a response is not possible in that timeframe, the Head of Admissions will write to inform the applicant, giving reasons for the delay. Where such queries are referred to the University partner, QAHE expects a response within 2 working days.

Applicants will be classified for fee purposes on receipt of the initial application. Once classified as a Home/EU or International applicant, the application will be forwarded to the Home Admissions team or International Admissions Team respectively for processing.

### **b. Academic assessment**

All applicants for a course are assessed against the same academic entry criteria. Where an applicant presents qualifications obtained overseas, the Admissions Team will verify the equivalence of this qualification and the corresponding grades using information provided by each of the partner institutions, UK NARIC or, where necessary, with the overseas awarding body directly.

QAHE Admissions staff are experienced in assessing a wide range of UK and international academic qualifications. However, in some instances the Admissions Team may need to seek further advice from appropriate admissions tutors within the relevant partner institutions before confirming an admissions decision.



### **c. English language assessment**

At QAHE teaching, assessment and student support are delivered in English. All applicants must therefore demonstrate proficiency in the use of the English language to the general standard required, and in the specific entry requirements of the course they are applying for. QAHE must also ensure that international applicants, who will need a Tier 4 visa to study with us, meet UKVI English language requirements.

Details of English language requirements, and the qualifications acceptable for entry are listed online within the course information pages.

Applicants are advised to have taken one of these English language qualifications recently (usually within two years of the intended enrolment date but Appendices 1-6 outline any partner specific requirements) and to submit the result with their application.

QAHE may choose to assess Home / EU applicants' language ability through the use of internal English language testing and / or the admissions interview process.

Mature applicants who do not have a formal English language qualification, and who do not require a Tier 4 visa to study with us, will normally be judged on their potential ability based on QAHE's assessment of an applicant's experience and skills to date. In this case, formal entry requirements may be waived at the discretion of the Admissions Team with the agreement of the respective partner institution.

Applicants who have taken more than one English language assessment should always be assessed against the most recent qualification obtained, based on the relevant test date.

### **d. Personal Statements**

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the information they provide is accurate and complete, and does not contain false or misleading information. Where a personal statement is requested as part of the application process, the information provided will be used to determine the applicant's interest in and suitability to study the selected course.

### **e. References**

Some courses have a formal requirement of relevant work experience and as such, references must be obtained to verify the information provided by the applicant. Similarly, where an applicant is being assessed on the basis of work experience, either in lieu of formal qualifications or in conjunction with other qualifications, references must be followed and the information verified.

If references are not a required part of the admissions process and the applicant clearly meets the entry criteria then this information does not need to be obtained, nor verified.

### **f. Interviews**

Applicants who have been identified as requiring an Admissions interview prior to a decision on the application, will be notified in a timely manner and an interview



arranged for the next available opportunity. Such interviews will normally take place as a face-to-face meeting however they may be carried out by telephone / skype at the discretion of QAHE staff.

Details of the questions and answers will be recorded by the QAHE staff member carrying out the interview and these will be added to the applicant's admissions file for consideration.

Applicants who are unable to communicate effectively during the admissions interview will be required to undertake, and pass, a formal English language test before their application can be progressed. Normally, applicants would be expected to undertake a formal English assessment prior to the admissions interview.

#### **g. Immigration specific requirements**

Applicants who intend to apply for a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK will also be assessed against UK immigration requirements, in particular requirements specific to Tier 4 of the Points Based System. QAHE aims to gather all of the essential information as part of the standard application process but staff may need to request additional information in order to complete a full assessment of the applicant and their suitability under Tier 4.

Any applicant who does not provide the information needed to make a complete assessment in line with Tier 4 will have their application withdrawn. If a conditional offer has already been issued, this will also be withdrawn.

QAHE will normally carry out additional checks with the UKVI on an applicant who has studied, worked or lived in the UK previously. As the UKVI usually take up to 5 working days to respond to such requests these applications will take longer to be processed by QAHE and a decision issued outside the previously stated timeframes.

#### **i. Academic progression**

Applicants who have studied in the UK previously with a Tier 4 (General) student visa will need to have successfully completed their most recent qualification in the UK and to be progressing to a course of study which is at a higher academic level.

Applicants may be considered for a course which is at the same academic level but only where it is deemed to meet the definition of academic progress contained in the Tier 4 regulations. In such cases, applicants will be required to provide additional information, through their personal statement or interview, to justify further study at the same academic level.

QAHE Admissions staff, in consultation with colleagues at the relevant partner institution will decide if an offer can be made in these circumstances.

#### **ii. Immigration history**

It is important for an international applicant to provide detailed and accurate information about their immigration history, specifically in relation to the UK. This should include all previous visits to the UK (under any immigration



category) and UK immigration applications submitted (where it was successful or refused). Admissions staff will need to consider if there is anything in an applicant's immigration background which might lead to an unsuccessful immigration application under Tier 4.

If an applicant is unable to provide details of their immigration history or relevant supporting documents (i.e. refusal notices), QAHE Admissions staff may request confirmation of an applicant's immigration history directly from the UKVI. This will normally be carried out via the relevant partner institution and their Premium Customer Service Team within the UKVI. The UKVI usually respond to such request within 5 working days.

Applicants are expected to declare all immigration refusals, for entry to the UK and any other country, and submit the corresponding refusal notices as part of the application.

### **iii. Study limit under Tier 4**

The UK immigration regulations include a maximum period of time which international students are permitted to study in the UK under Tier 4 towards qualifications of a certain academic level. For this reason, applicants must provide detailed and accurate information about all previous study in the UK and the corresponding immigration applications.

When processing an international application, QAHE Admissions staff will consider whether or not the applicant will be able to complete their chosen qualification within any remaining Tier 4 study limits.

If an applicant is unable to provide comprehensive details of the academic and immigration history along with the relevant supporting documents, the Admissions Team may request confirmation of the details directly from the UKVI. This will normally be carried out via the relevant partner institution and their Premium Customer Service Team within the UKVI. The UKVI usually respond to such request within 5 working days.

### **iv. Pre-CAS interviews**

As part of the admissions process, and prior to receipt of a CAS, applicants may be required to go through a further interview carried out by QAHE staff to determine the likelihood that he/she will be able to make a successful Tier 4 immigration application. This interview will assess any additional factors which might be viewed as "high risk" by the UKVI and which may suggest that the applicant may not be a genuine student.

QAHE and partner institutions retain the right to refuse a CAS to any applicant even if that applicant is already holding an unconditional offer.

### **h. Financial ability**

There is an expectation that all students will have sufficient funds to pay tuition fees and living expenses during their period of study, and applicants may be asked to give details of their funding arrangements at the point of application.



International applicants who intend to apply for a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK will usually be required to submit copies of the evidence that he/she intends to use to support a Tier 4 immigration application prior to the issuance of a CAS. This evidence must meet the requirements outlined in the UK Immigration Rules and Tier 4 Policy Guidance.

## **12. Other Specific Applicant Groups**

Working in conjunction with our partner institutions, QAHE strives to provide a professional recruitment and admissions service to all applicants.

### **a. Widening participation**

QAHE is committed to Widening Participation and fair access, encouraging applicants from all social and cultural backgrounds. Further information is available online at <https://www.qahighereducation.com/about-us/access-and-participation/>

### **b. Care leavers**

QAHE welcomes and supports students who have been in local authority care, including those who are now mature students.

### **c. Under 18's – Safeguarding Policy**

Students who have not reached the age of 18 at the point of entry to their course are legally considered to be 'minors' (i.e. not yet adults) under English law. QAHE has an enhanced duty of care to all students under the age of 18 and as such, will carry out a full risk assessment on applicants who are deemed to be minors at the point of entry to their chosen course. The QAHE admissions process requires that a declaration form signed by the relevant parent or guardian must be submitted before an unconditional offer is issued to the applicant.

It is the responsibility of the QAHE Admissions team to refer such applicants to the QAHE Student Welfare team who will carry out relevant risk assessments before the applicant is permitted to enrol and provide further advice and guidance before the applicant is permitted to enrol.

Appendices 1-6 contain any partner specific requirements when dealing with under 18's.

### **d. Mature applicants**

Applications from mature applicants (over 21), without the required qualifications but who can demonstrate relevant experience, will be given consideration in line with Section 8c of this Policy Framework. QAHE welcomes applications from students of all ages and backgrounds and applicants are assessed on their own merits. No applicant will be discriminated against on the basis of age.

### **e. Applicants with disabilities**

If an applicant has declared a disability on their application form this will have no bearing on determining their academic suitability for the programme however if it is deemed necessary, a separate welfare assessment will also be carried out.

If an offer is made, the applicant will be strongly encouraged to complete a self-assessment form and return this to QAHE's Welfare Team in order to ensure that



appropriate support arrangements can be put in place before studies commence however such a declaration is not a condition of offer.

#### **f. Applicants with criminal convictions**

QAHE has a duty to ensure the safety of its student and staff communities, and that of other people with whom students interact as part of their course of study.

Applicants who intend to study a course delivered by QAHE will be asked to declare any unspent criminal convictions as part of the application process and prior to accepting an offer that has been issued. This information is submitted to QAHE Admissions by completing a disclosure form available on the QAHE website.

Declared unspent convictions will be assessed by the QAHE Criminal Convictions panel prior to enrolment on the programme. If appropriate, more information will be requested from the applicant. An unspent criminal conviction does not preclude an applicant from studying at QAHE but may lead to an adjustment to the offer. Suitable applicants will not be refused a place because of offences which are not relevant to, and do not place them or make them a risk, at the campus where they are studying. A final decision will depend on the nature of the conviction and the programme applied for.

Applicants intending to study at a partner institution main campus who declare an unspent criminal conviction will have their information processed in line with partner institution policy on criminal convictions.

Applicants with international convictions will need to check with NACRO as to whether or not such convictions will be considered spent or unspent convictions in the UK, and declare these where applicable.

### **13. Unsuccessful Applications**

Where an applicant is unsuccessful in obtaining an offer for their chosen course, the admissions team can provide detailed and constructive feedback regarding the reasons for rejection. Such feedback is provided on request only. Letters informing applicants that they have been unsuccessful provide information on how to seek feedback from the admissions team.

Before advising an applicant that their application to a programme of study has been unsuccessful, the Admissions Team may first consider if the applicant is eligible for admissions to an alternative course offered by QAHE, see Section 15 below.

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome or treatment of their application, should raise their concerns informally with the Head of Admissions in the first instance. This is Stage 1 of the QAHE Student Complaints Procedure. Where concerns remain, applicants are advised to use the formal process outlined in Stages 2 and 3 of the QAHE Student Complaints Procedure which has been established to safeguard the interests of applicants and students.



A copy of this is available to download at <https://www.qahighereducation.com/about-us/policies-procedures/>

It should be noted that complaints outlining a specific concern relating to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration will be accepted. Complaints will not be considered about matters of academic judgement regarding an applicant's suitability to study a programme nor where the applicant has failed to meet non-academic requirements set by external agencies such as immigration requirements.

Complaints submitted appealing against the outcome of an application will not result in the review of an academic decision but a check will be undertaken to ensure that the decision was made fairly based on the original evidence submitted and the correct process followed.

#### **14. Offer to Alternative Course**

In processing an application the Admissions Team will determine if there is an alternative course of study for which the applicant may be more suitable. An offer to an alternative course may arise due to:

- additional information obtained during Admissions interview;
- the applicant's failure to meet the entry requirements of their preferred course; or
- changes to the course(s) of study available at QAHE.

Applicants will only be considered for admission to an alternative course where he/she meets the entry requirements for this alternative course and the course is deemed to be relevant or of interest to the applicant.

Applicants do not have to be considered for an alternative course and can opt out from this process at any point during the admissions process.

Normally, no new application will be required if the alternative course, delivered by QAHE, is available with the same partner institution. However where the alternative course is offered by a different partner institution, but still delivered by QAHE, then a new application will be required.

#### **15. Changes to and Discontinuation of Programmes**

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to discontinue a course during the application cycle. If so, the following process must be followed:

- The Admissions Team dealing with the application will ensure that all applicants who have applied to the discontinued course are sent written notification, including the UCAS discontinued course form (where applicable). Where possible, the applicant must be offered an alternative course with QAHE which is similar;
- Applicants will be given a date by which to respond. If no response is received then the application will be withdrawn by QAHE Admissions staff.





- Where no similar alternative is available but the student wishes to be considered for another course delivered by QAHE but in a different subject area then a new complete application will normally be requested.

Where there is any change to the listed modules available within a degree programme, QAHE Admissions staff will write to all applicants holding offers to inform them of the changes. Offer holders will be asked to respond and confirm that they still wish to join the programme despite the module changes. This process is outlined on the QAHE website.

## **16. Deferral Policy**

A deferral is any instance in which an applicant requests to delay their enrolment on a programme until a future intake. This can be requested at any stage in the application process up to enrolment. Deferral requests within the same academic year will be considered after which time the applicant is required to reapply. Deferral is not guaranteed as the applicant will always be reconsidered against any new revised entry criteria.

If deferring more than one calendar year the applicant will be required to reapply and re-submit documents.

Whilst QAHE considers deferral requests, it is not possible to guarantee that a course will definitely run in the requested year of entry.

## **17. Multiple Applications and Re-applications**

Prospective students may submit multiple applications for different courses of study offered by QAHE in any single academic year however this is not encouraged.

Applicants who have submitted 3 requests to defer or re-apply for a course, but have still not enrolled on a programme with QAHE will be withdrawn from the admissions process and future applications will not be considered.

Applicants who are unsuccessful in obtaining an offer may apply again in a subsequent academic year. Applications will be considered against the standard course entry requirements for that academic year. The new application should demonstrate an improvement from the previous application. Admissions staff will draw upon all information from previous applications or any previous registrations as a student at QAHE when assessing suitability for a course.

## **18. Students Seeking to Transfer from another UK Higher Education Institution**

Students seeking to transfer their registration on a taught programme from another higher education institution within the United Kingdom to one offered by QAHE should apply for admission normally, requesting prior learning to be taken into account outlined as in Section 8 above. In these cases, credits may be considered to permit advanced entry, but marks achieved elsewhere are not carried forward.

Transfers within QAHE but across partners should be treated as any other transfer from another UK HEI although there will continue to be some consistency in the actual place of study.





## **19. Readmissions Policy**

Students who have previously chosen to discontinue their study on a course at QAHE may apply for re-admissions onto the same or different course of study. Such applicants will be considered for direct entry against the standard course entry requirements for that year or for advanced entry based on past academic performance during his/her period of study at QAHE.

Where a student has chosen to discontinue their studies previously due to external factors i.e. medical reasons, QAHE reserves the right to request additional information confirming that such factors will not hinder the applicant's future study.

Students who have been excluded by QAHE will not be considered for readmissions onto the same, or a different course of study at QAHE.

## **20. Fraudulent Applications and Documents**

Applicants may not omit any requested or relevant information, make any misrepresentation (for example, through plagiarism) or give false information at any point of the application process including after an offer is made. Should this occur QAHE reserves the right to refuse the application, withdraw an offer of a place and/or revoke a student's registration. QAHE may also, in accordance with its external obligations, notify third party organisations about any suspected misrepresentation.

The Admissions Team are trained in identifying and dealing with fraudulent documents. Admissions staff will undertake all possible means to verify the information and/or documents included in an application but where concerns continue to exist, the application will be refused. Verification of qualifications may be undertaken at various stages in the admissions / enrolment process as outlined in Appendices 1-6.

Applications found to omit relevant information, incorporate fraudulent documents or false information which have been submitted by agents will be reported to the QAHE Agent Compliance Manager for inclusion in the review of agents. A monthly report of Agent compliance is provided to QAHE Senior Management and any major concerns will be addressed at this point.

## **21. Withdrawal of Offer**

The offer of a place to study at QAHE is made on the basis that actions or statements by or on behalf of an applicant are honest and accurate. The discovery of false statements, actions or omissions may lead to the offer of a place being withdrawn, or in the case of enrolled students to their enrolment being terminated.

An offer may also be withdrawn if it is no longer possible to accept the student owing to changes in government regulations, such as amendments to the immigration rules, or if insufficient numbers of applicants to a course mean that it is not reasonably commercially viable to run that course.



All international offers remain subject to final approval by the partner institution and unconditional offers may be withdrawn if the CAS is ultimately refused.

## **22. Acceptance of offers and deposits**

In order for a place to be reserved on a programme, applicants must confirm that they would like to accept the offer to study at QAHE. Acceptance of the offer is formalised by completing and submitting the acceptance form along with payment to QAHE of a deposit, where specified in the conditional offer letter.

For all applicants a deposit is required at the point at which the offer of a place is firmly accepted. In these cases, the amount paid will be deducted from the total tuition fee due at the start of the academic programme. The Terms and Conditions of offer outlines the refunds policy should an applicant not progress to enrolment following the payment of a deposit.

Submission of the completed acceptance form and deposit payments should be made prior to the relevant deadlines as outlined on the QAHE website for each programme of study.

## **23. Cancellation Rights**

The applicant can choose not to continue with their application at any point in the admissions process up to the point of enrolment as outlined in the respective Terms and Conditions of offer. Prospective students are asked to notify the Admissions Team in writing that he/she does not wish to continue with their application.

The cancellation rights of applicants and enrolled students are clearly outlined in the offer letter templates and in the Terms and Conditions available at pre-enrolment and enrolment.

QAHE will normally make use of the respective partner institution's terms and conditions however where local variations are necessary these will be agreed in conjunction with the partner institution.

## **24. Refunds policy**

Details of the refunds policy is included in the Terms and Conditions of offer issued to applicants and also available to view at the pre-enrolment and enrolment stages.

## **25. Complaints Procedure**

QAHE is committed to delivering a high quality, efficient and fair admissions process. Applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome or treatment of their application, should raise their complaint informally with the Head of Admissions in the first instance. Complaints will be dealt with the process outlined in QAHE's CMA policy, available online at <https://www.qahighereducation.com/about-us/policies-procedures/>

In the event that an applicant wishes to make a formal complaint, the QAHE Student Complaints Procedure should be followed. A copy of this process is available to access online at <https://www.qahighereducation.com/about-us/policies-procedures/> This procedure has been drawn up to ensure that all



complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, consistently and with due regard to the Equalities Act. For the avoidance of doubt, QAHE will only correspond with the applicant, unless the applicant has provided written permission for the University to discuss their application with a third party.

Complaints outlining a specific concern relating to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration will be accepted. Complaints will not be considered about matters of academic judgement regarding an applicant's suitability to study a programme nor where the applicant has failed to meet non-academic requirements set by external agencies such as immigration requirements.

## **26. Personal Data / GDPR Policy**

All data is processed in line with QA's GDPR policy which can be found online at:

### **a. Prospective enquirers**

QAHE collects data on prospective enquirers who request course information, attend open days or other recruitment events. This data is collected for the specific purpose of providing information to prospective applicants and their parents.

### **b. Prospective applicants**

QAHE needs to collect, maintain and use personal data relating to its applicants to facilitate the process of applications for study, enrolment, to administer courses and to provide facilities for students. Further information regarding the use of data is available via the QAHE privacy policy which is available at:

Data collected during the admissions and registration processes will be used for the purposes of maintaining student records, managing processes in relation to academic progress, providing personal and academic advice and support and providing access to the facilities offered within QAHE.

QAHE also needs to collect and process sensitive personal data such as ethnic origin, disability data and sometimes other health data in order to undertake equal opportunity monitoring, and provide access to some courses and support for students where appropriate.

The personal data held about applicants is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. It is shared internally with QAHE staff where appropriate, and with the respective partner institution in order to meet the purposes detailed above. The Act requires that any information held is accurate and has been processed fairly and lawfully. It gives applicants the right to check the information held and to correct it if necessary.

All data is held and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Anonymised and aggregated applicant data are analysed by QAHE, for purposes including institutional and statutory monitoring, market research, planning, and teaching and learning, in order to ensure that our processes are fair and effective and our courses best reflect applicant need.