

Contextualised Admissions Policy

Contextualised admissions is defined as information and data used by universities and colleges, to assess an applicant's prior attainment and potential, in the context of their individual circumstances. The aim is to form a more complete picture of the applicant.

Contextual data includes educational, geo-demographic and socio-economic background data, such as historic data about an applicant's school or college. Contextual information relates to individual applicant circumstances, such as if they have been in care, or involved in widening participation activities.

As a University we are keen to encourage students from a wide range of backgrounds to participate in higher education and the additional information gained through contextual data/information allows us to recognise a student's achievements and identify their potential to succeed in the context of their background and experience.

Contextual information is primarily drawn from the UCAS application form, with the information on participation in widening participation/outreach activities provided by the University's Outreach (WP) Team. The following information will be taken into consideration:

- Experience of being looked after / in care for a period of time (applicants who declare 'yes' to the 'time spent in care' question on their UCAS application)
- Having parents or guardians who have not attended university (identified through references and/or UCAS)
- Participation in a University of Chester widening participation programme (sustained involvement over an extended period or a shorter, but more intense period of contact)
- Attendance at schools with lower than average progression to HE or those that have a higher propensity of students from low participation neighbourhoods or (identified through reference and/or UCAS)
- Home postcode is in a low participation neighbourhood (this information is collected from the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) score made available by the Office for Students. The score ranges 1 (low participation) to 5 (high participation). The University will give consideration to those applicants from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2)

A contextualised offer is an offer which may be reduced, by one grade or more, from the standard entry requirement and takes any contextual information into account if an applicant's academic achievement has fallen marginally short of the conditions of the original offer. An alternative programme of study e.g. foundation year, may also be offered.

The University will also consider a wide range of equivalent qualifications and offers a range of different entry points into higher education.

Review and Monitoring

While the University is committed to widening access and providing opportunities to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, it is not in the interests of the University or the applicant to admit students who do not have the full potential to succeed. We will therefore monitor students who have been admitted on this basis and monitor the impact of the implementation of the policy. This information will inform any expansion to, or revisions, of the policy in future.

Support for Applicants

Applicants admitted on the basis of a contextual confirmation decision will have access to the same support services as all other students. Our Study Skills Advisory Team, part of the University's Learning and Teaching Institute, is dedicated to supporting students' learning development in a number of areas, including numeracy and statistics, time management, academic writing and referencing, and critical thinking.

All undergraduates at the University are also assigned a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), who can offer advice and guidance and can help in building course confidence, academic skills and increased awareness of course opportunities.