

Higher Education Admissions Policy

APPROVED BY SELT on June 2025

Applies to:	
Harrogate College	X
Keighley College	X
Leeds City College	X
Leeds Conservatoire	X
Leeds Sixth Form College / Pudsey Sixth Form College	
Luminate Group Services	
University Centre Leeds	

CHANGE CONTROL

Version:	1	
Approval route		
Approval committee (ELT, SELT, Board)	Date approved	Version
SELT	12 June 2025	1
University Centre Academic Board	19 May 2025	1
Leeds Conservatoire Academic Board	11 March 2025	1
Name of author:		
Name of responsible committee:		
Academic Board		
Related policies: (list)	Admissions Procedure General Appeals Policy General Appeals Process Published Information Policy International Policy Student Support Procedure	
Equality impact assessment completed	Date:	03 March 2025
	Assessment type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full <input type="checkbox"/> Part <input type="checkbox"/> Not required	
Environmental Impact Assessment Completed	Date:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not required	

Policy will be communicated via:	Website, VLE
Next review date:	June 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this Policy, University Centre Leeds (incorporating campuses at Mabgate, Park Lane, Printworks and Quarry Hill, as well as HE provision at Keighley College and Harrogate College) and Leeds Conservatoire will be known as 'The Provider'.

Its purpose is to ensure that the HE Admissions Policy and Procedures are implemented consistently across the Provider and that the requirements of awarding bodies are met. In addition, the HE Admissions Policy and procedures are fully informed by the requirements of awarding bodies, the revised QAA Quality Code, QAA Guidelines and OfS.

- Admissions procedures conform to the guiding principles relating to admissions, recruitment and widening access in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education;
- Policies and procedures for application, selection and admission to higher education courses are transparent and accessible;
- It uses fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully;
- It reduces or removes unnecessary barriers for prospective students;
- Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions;
- All staff, representatives and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced;
- Widening access strategies and policies are continually developed in line with local and national guidance.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all applications for undergraduate and postgraduate courses at the Provider. It is intended to provide guidance for staff and prospective students on the Provider's procedures for recruiting, selecting and admitting all students to Higher Education programmes.

This policy does not cover Leeds Junior Conservatoire.

3. POLICY AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The Provider is committed to admitting prospective students who are most likely to benefit from our course and will:

- Sustain high academic standards consistent with the requirements of the Provider and their validating bodies;
- Continue to commit to equality of opportunity. There will be no discrimination against prospective students on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010;
- Create a working culture that respects, welcomes and harnesses differences for the benefit of the organisation and the individual.

The Provider will achieve this by:

- Encouraging applications from all those with the talent, academic ability and motivation to succeed at the Provider;
- Assessing each application individually and equitably;
- Offering places to those who meet or have the potential to meet the course entry criteria and who therefore have the potential to complete their course successfully;

- Maintaining integrity and transparency in its admissions process;
- Striving to create a working environment in which students are enabled to develop and progress to their full potential.

Equal Opportunities

The Provider welcomes applications from students of all backgrounds and abilities and has developed its current HE curriculum principally to encourage widening participation, through quality learning and progression opportunities. This is in line with the Equality Act of 2010 and the Provider's own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Each application will be treated fairly regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Admissions process

Applications are normally made through UCAS, via either the UCAS Undergraduate or (Leeds Conservatoire only) UCAS Conservatoires schemes. Details on which scheme each course is in can be found on the Provider's websites.

The Direct Application process may be used where the UCAS system may present a barrier to the prospective student or where this route better suits a recruitment initiative. This route neither increases nor decreases the likelihood of receiving an offer. The Direct Application process cannot be used if an application already exists in the UCAS system for the current application cycle.

All applications received by the published UCAS/UCAS Conservatoires deadlines will be given equal consideration.

All applications will undergo preliminary screening by the Admissions Team, focusing primarily on identifying and requesting missing information.

Full application guides are available on the Provider's respective websites. As part of the application process, prospective students may be required to audition either online or in person, submit an online portfolio of work or take part in an in-person or online interview. Prospective students will be contacted throughout the process to inform them of what they need to do next.

Entry criteria

Entry requirements are set through the Programme Teams and respective Validation Partners following the Validations and Approvals process and minimum entry level setting for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study at the Provider, taking into consideration requirements of the validating bodies. This is reviewed regularly.

The Provider has the discretion to vary the standard offer. It may be appropriate to judge the potential of the applicant to succeed in ways other than by academic achievement, for example

performance at audition or prior practical experience or achievement. The decision to make a prospective student a non-standard offer will be authorised by the Dean of Higher Education/Vice Principal.

This is for exceptional circumstances and is not a means to circumvent the published admissions criteria. Instead, it is designed to ensure that we do not turn away prospective students with the potential to succeed who have demonstrated this in other ways than by being able to meet the standard academic entry requirement. The ability to cope with both the academic and practical aspects of the programme will be evaluated when considering making an exceptional prospective student a non-standard offer.

Academic entry requirements:

Details of the standard entry requirements for each course are published in the programme specifications and prospectus on the Providers websites (please see appendices), as well as on the UCAS website. The Provider considers a wide range of UK, EU and international qualifications for entry, taking guidance on the equivalency of non-UK qualifications from UK ENIC (formally UK NARIC) or the Provider's International Policy.

Non-Academic entry requirements:

All Leeds Conservatoire programmes and relevant University Centre Leeds programmes - As part of the Provider's selection process, prospective students will be required to submit portfolios of work and/or take part in an audition and/or interview. Prospective students have the option to attend auditions and/or interviews in person. For Leeds Conservatoire prospective students also have the option of submitting material through an external online submission portal.

English Language Requirements:

Leeds Conservatoire only - The minimum level of English Language proficiency is GCSE English Language or English Literature at grade 4/C. All prospective students should have achieved this qualification (or an accepted alternative qualification) by the programme start date.

University Centre Leeds – the desirable minimum level of English Language proficiency is GCSE English Language at grade 4/C. Certain programmes require certificated evidence as part of the entry requirements – prospective students should refer to the programme specifications available on the Providers website. Where GCSE English Language grade 4/C is an essential requirement, prospective students should have achieved this qualification (or an accepted alternative qualification) by the programme start date.

All prospective students whose first language is not English must have achieved an appropriate level of competence in English Language, demonstrated by a recognised proficiency test or qualification. Any enquiries as to the suitability of an English qualification should be directed to the Admissions Team.

Prospective students who will require a Student Visa (previously Tier 4 visa), as per the Provider's International Policy to study in the UK, are required to have achieved a recognised proficiency test that is still within the validity period of the test provider. For University Centre Leeds this must be a UKVI approved Secure English Language Test (SELT).

Verification:

Prospective students are required to submit verifiable documentary evidence of achieved qualifications and are responsible for any financial charges incurred, e.g. replacement copies or obtaining certified English translations. The Provider reserves the right to verify all qualifications declared on an application.

If the Provider has any reason to believe that a prospective student or referee has left out any information, given false or misleading information, or supplied a personal statement that the prospective student has not written themselves, the Provider may take any necessary steps to check whether it is accurate or complete.

The Provider has the right to cancel the prospective student's application if it is found to contain fraudulent information.

The Provider has the right to withdraw an offer of a place if the potential student is found to have omitted key information from their application.

Assessment process

All applications are assessed individually and equitably; the Provider considers applications from all prospective students who meet or have the potential to meet the course entry requirements and who therefore have the potential to complete their course successfully.

When considering a potential student's suitability for their chosen course, the Provider will consider the following:

- Achievement in awarded qualifications
- Predicted achievement in qualifications still in progress
- Personal statement, or statement of purpose, for evidence of the reason they wish to study the course and their career aspirations
- References
- Interview (where applicable)
- Portfolio (where applicable)
- Audition (where applicable)
- Intended direction of study and example of critical writing (postgraduate only, where applicable)

The Provider recognises that it may need to be flexible during the recruitment process in order to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students. The Provider also recognises the need to make reasonable adjustments for individual prospective students where appropriate - for example, prospective students with a long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty – to allow them to demonstrate their potential.

The Dean of Higher Education/Vice Principal is the final arbiter in any unresolved application and may vary the conditions of individual offers if they consider it appropriate to do so.

If a prospective student wishes to inform us confidentially of key issues that are not outlined in their application, they may contact the Admissions Team.

Leeds Conservatoire only - Auditions held at the conservatoire will, where appropriate, be conducted by a minimum of two members of staff (e.g. one performance specialist and one academic staff member). Online interviews will normally be conducted by one member of staff.

Prospective students who do not attend an audition and/or interview, fail to submit a portfolio by the deadlines set by the Provider, or repeatedly fail to engage with the Provider, will receive an unsuccessful decision on their application.

Widening Participation

Under the terms of University Centre Leeds and Leeds Conservatoire's Access and Participation Plans, in order to ensure that no prospective students are deterred from applying to the Provider, we do not charge audition fees for any of our courses.

Leeds Conservatoire only - We refund the cost of travel for an in-person audition at Leeds Conservatoire for UK resident prospective students from lower income families (on submission of appropriate evidence and receipts) and the Global Majority. All prospective students are informed about this when invited for audition/interview and it is advertised on our website and in open day materials.

Summer Academy (Leeds Conservatoire only)

Prospective students who have successfully completed the conservatoire Summer Academy course receive a reduction of 8 UCAS tariff points from any subsequent offer to study at the conservatoire at undergraduate level. Successful completion will be identified by the Admissions Team and reflected in the official offer of a place.

Communicating with Prospective Students

All communication regarding applications will be conducted directly with the prospective student and not a third party, including relatives, unless the Provider receives specific instructions to allow such correspondence (*NB this covers a prospective student who may be unable to communicate directly with the Provider but needs to progress an application*).

Prospective students who have applied via UCAS/UCAS Conservatoires should be aware of key deadlines throughout the admissions cycle. These updates will be provided by UCAS/UCAS Conservatoires.

Communications from the Provider could include, but are not limited to:

- Acknowledge receipt of application
- Requests for further information to assess an application
- Requests for further information to determine correct fee status
- Invitation to book an audition/interview or to submit an online portfolio
- Offer letter with relevant key information
- Confirmation of admission when all conditions of offer have been met
- Information relating to student visas (where applicable)
- Enrolment and induction information

Decisions and outcomes

Prospective students who have applied via UCAS will receive notification of the outcome of their offer via their UCAS application on the UCAS Hub. Those that applied directly to the Provider will receive the outcome of their application in their Applicant Portal.

Successful applications:

UCAS application – notification received via UCAS. This will include any applicable offer conditions.

Direct applications – notification received via email.

All successful applications will receive a formal offer letter which will be viewable in the prospective students Applicant Portal, which will contain the following details:

- Course of study being offered
- Year of entry
- Duration of the course
- Specialist study (Leeds Conservatoire only)
- Tuition fees

Alternative course offers:

Following initial assessment of an application, or after an interview and/or audition and/or portfolio submission, the Provider may decide that it is unable to make an offer for the original course applied for, but that the prospective student may be suitable for an alternative course. This could either be to include an additional year of study (e.g. a foundation year) or for an alternative course.

Unsuccessful applications:

Notifications of an unsuccessful application will be received via UCAS, and/or via the Applicant Portal for direct applications.

Leeds Conservatoire only - Due to the volume of applications we receive, feedback for unsuccessful applications is only available on request. Certain courses are unable to provide feedback – the relevant audition guides will specify the instances where feedback will not be provided.

If, after receiving feedback from the Provider, a prospective student feels an error has occurred, an Admissions Appeal can be made. Details of grounds for appeal and timescales can be found in the Admissions Appeals Policy.

Reserve lists (Leeds Conservatoire only):

The Provider receives a large volume of applications, which exceeds the number of places available so cannot necessarily offer places to all prospective students who meet or are predicted to meet the minimum entry requirements. Consideration also has to be given during the recruitment process to ensure an appropriate mix of instruments within each cohort and pathway or programme, where applicable. Prospective students that are placed on a reserve list will receive further details about expected timescales and relevant deadlines.

Responding to offers

UCAS applications – responses should be made via the UCAS application on the UCAS Hub. UCAS will communicate important deadlines for responding to offers.

Direct applications – responses should be made via the Applicant Portal.

By accepting an offer, the prospective student agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the Provider and any applicable validating body, as outlined in the Terms and Conditions for Students.

Successful prospective students who firmly accept the Provider's offer of a place have a statutory right to withdraw the acceptance without providing a reason within 14 days from the date on which they accept the place.

Prospective students with additional support needs

Whilst all prospective students are required to meet the same criteria for entry, the Provider recognises that, in order to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students, it may need to be flexible and, where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments for individual prospective students. Should a prospective student have particular support needs during the application/audition/interview process, they are encouraged to contact the Admissions Team who will liaise with the relevant Student Support Team to discuss any reasonable adjustments that can be made.

Leeds Conservatoire only - After an offer is made, the prospective student is advised to contact the Disability Support Team to begin the process of discussing what support may be accessed at the conservatoire. Prospective students are required to declare their condition directly to the conservatoire using the Student Support Needs Referral Form on the Disability Support section of the conservatoire website. Once the referral form and any relevant supporting evidence has been received, a member of the team will be in contact to discuss the potential individual access arrangements that are able to be put in place.

Criminal convictions

The Provider believes that an unspent criminal conviction should not automatically prevent an individual from studying with us. Disclosing a criminal conviction is not a requirement of an application to study at the Provider. Prospective students will only ever be assessed on their application, audition/interview/portfolio submission and suitability for the course.

The exception to this applies to prospective students who would require a visa to study in the UK as they are required to disclose this information as part of the visa application process.

Although there is no need to declare a conviction as part of an application, prospective students currently on licence are expected to make the Provider aware of any conditions which may prevent them from fully engaging with their programme.

Where a programme contains a mandatory placement, students will be required to complete the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check prior to commencement on placement. This cost will be covered by the relevant department.

The Provider is able to give specialist advice and support for students entering our community from many different backgrounds. Students coming to the Provider with a spent or unspent conviction may find it useful to connect with these services and gain additional support with studying at the Provider.

Prospective students who would like further information on the range of services, or to confidentially discuss a licence condition which they believe may prevent them from fully engaging with their proposed studies, are advised to contact the Student Support team.

Under 18's

The Provider welcomes applications from people of all ages, subject to meeting our entry requirements, however all prospective students must be at least 18 years of age by:

- University Centre Leeds - 1st September of the year of entry

- Leeds Conservatoire - the final enrolment date/end of Teaching Week 2, which is usually the first week in October.

Re-application/re-admission

If a prospective student wishes to discuss re-applying following a previously unsuccessful application, they should in the first instance contact the Admissions Team.

Where a former student was either asked to leave their programme of study or was required to withdraw following a failed stage after allowed resits, the Admissions Team will liaise with Registry and Student Support teams to determine whether the former student is able to be reconsidered for entry.

Deferred entry

The Provider welcomes applications for deferred entry for the majority of courses offered. Deferrals will be considered for a maximum of one academic year. After this point the prospective student will be required to re-apply (and re-audition and/or interview and/or submit new portfolio, if applicable). Deferrals will not be considered for some of our performing arts courses and for any prospective student who will require a Student Visa to study in the UK.

Changes to programmes

Where the delivery of a course is uncertain because it is subject to final approval, this will be made clear in publicity materials. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable alternative in the event the programme is subsequently not approved.

Where the delivery of a programme is uncertain because of low prospective student numbers, this will be communicated to prospective students at the earliest stage and every effort will be made to identify a suitable alternative in the event the programme is subsequently cancelled.

Right to study checks

Where a prospective student is a non-UK national, the Provider is required to check that they hold an immigration status that would allow them to study in the UK, in accordance with UKVI requirements. Prospective students may be asked to provide evidence such as a passport, Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), Entry Clearance vignette or Digital Immigration Status (to be verified using a 'share code' generated by the prospective student).

If a prospective student requires a Student Visa to study in the UK, the Provider acts as a sponsor and will issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) once all academic and financial conditions have been met. It is the prospective student's responsibility to ensure they comply with the requirements set out by the UKVI and that they have adequate time to complete their UKVI application. The Provider is not responsible for any delays that occur once the CAS has been issued.

Financial information / fee assessment

Information about tuition fees, as well as any available scholarships or bursaries, for all programmes is detailed on the Provider's websites. Prospective students will be classified as Home or Overseas for fee purposes and will be assessed using the guidance provided by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and the Providers International Policy. If the Provider considers the prospective students fee status to be unclear based on the information on their

application form and/or enquiry, they will be asked to complete a fee assessment questionnaire and to provide supporting documents in order to correctly classify their status. Further information can be found in the Student Fees Policy.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Prospective students who do not have qualifications that meet the standard minimum entry requirements, may be able to gain admission to a programme via RPL, based on learning gained from prior experience. This is an alternative route of entry for mature prospective students (those that will be 21 or over at the point of enrolment). Some examples of experience that may be considered include paid or voluntary work, and community activities related to the programme of interest.

Prospective students who are currently studying at another institution and wish to transfer their credits to gain advanced entry to an undergraduate course at the Provider should submit an application. Advanced entry applications will be considered if the prospective student has passed at least 120 credits of Level 4 (Year 1) study, or they are currently studying on a degree programme in a closely related subject for the programme of interest.

Prospective students will need to provide copies of official transcripts, programme specifications/module descriptors and learning outcomes for all credits they wish to be considered for transfer so that relevant academic/curriculum teams can assess whether the learning outcomes for the completed credits can be mapped to the equivalent level of study for the programme of interest.

Following consideration of the full application documents and any relevant audition/interview, prospective students will be informed of the outcome. If the application is successful, the point of entry as well as any relevant conditions will be confirmed.

4. REVIEW

Owner: Admissions

Introduced:

Last review: June 2025

Next Review: June 2026

The Provider reserves the right to review the policy at any time.

Change Summary		
Version	Date	Summary of Changes