

## Case study 6: A non-selective science programme at a research intensive Scottish university

<b>Programme of Study:</b>	<b>BSc Biological Sciences</b>
<b>Total applications received:</b>	<b>2038</b>
<b>Places available:</b>	<b>374</b>
<b>Applications per place:</b>	<b>5.45</b>
<b>Applicants invited for interview:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Offers made:</b>	<b>1783</b>
<b>Percentage of offers made to applicants:</b>	<b>87.5% (those who did not receive an offer did not meet the specified entry criteria).</b>
<b>Standard Scottish Qualifications Offer</b>	<b>SQA Highers: BBBB or more if two sittings</b>
<b>Standard A-level offer</b>	<b>BBB or more if two sittings</b>
<b>Average tariff score of accepted applicants:</b>	<b>BBB-AAA/BBBB-AAAAA</b>
<b>Proportion of accepted applicants with qualifications other than Scottish:</b>	<b>36% (197/309)</b>

### Selection process

<b>Centralised or devolved selection</b>	<b>Devolved</b>
<b>Is an admissions test required?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Are interviews or auditions held?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Interview/audition period</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Equal consideration date</b>	<b>15 January</b>
<p><b>Policy on considering applications after this date</b>  Targets are set at College level and so the decision on whether applications for Biological Sciences will be considered after this date is dependent on numbers at College level. In the current cycle, applications received after this deadline have not been considered.</p>	

The undergraduate admissions function at the University is devolved to College level with responsibility at the centre for quality assurance (ie checking that the process is fair and accurate) and ensuring common, consistent process. Admissions decisions are taken by professional admissions staff at College level against criteria determined in consultation with academic colleagues.

### ***Admissions policy setting process***

Admissions Policy is established at University level and implemented at College level. The University is committed to admitting the very best students from a wide range of backgrounds and setting academic achievement in context is core to our admissions policy. Minimum entrance requirements are not established on the basis of demand for the programme but rather on the level of academic achievement which evidence suggests is required to undertake the programme successfully. Entrance requirements are set at this level to encourage applications from a diverse range of backgrounds. The University is actively engaged in a number of partnership projects to encourage applications from groups which are currently under-represented on our campus. We pledge to make an offer of admission to all applicants from these groups who demonstrate the potential to meet our entry requirements.

Through the annual Planning Round target numbers of students are agreed for each College. Detailed analysis of the previous year's data for applications, offers and entrants is undertaken to inform the setting of targets at subject level. On the basis of these figures the minimum academic requirements for entry are considered and amended if necessary. If in the previous cycle the minimum entrance requirements were not sufficient to guarantee an offer the level of a typical offer is also determined.

### **Admissions criteria (as described in UCAS entry profile – academic and non-academic)**

In addition to the specified academic grades for entry we also have specific subject requirements to be met.

We ask all applicants to demonstrate a commitment and motivation relevant to their proposed programme of study. We would wish to see evidence of skills, qualities and attributes which will equip them well for success in their studies. These will be general such as organisation and planning, time management etc but may also be specific to their programme of study e.g. field and laboratory work, numerical analysis, project work etc. We would wish to see a clear understanding of what the course entails and reasons why they think they are suited to it. For Biological Sciences the personal statement will not be used for selection purposes but rather to ensure a strong match between the applicant and their specific programme of choice.

### ***Detailed description of process***

All application forms received before the January 15 deadline are initially screened to ensure that they meet the specific and general requirements for entry. At this stage fee status and any declared disability or criminal conviction are also noted for future action.

For selecting programmes the application would then be passed to a professional Admissions Officer for detailed consideration against a range of criteria. Because Biological Science programmes are not

selecting the Admissions Officer simply needs to confirm that the applicant has achieved/is likely to achieve the entry requirements and has demonstrated suitable commitment and motivation for the programme of study to enable an offer to be made. Offers will be made on a rolling basis from when the admissions cycle opens in October until all applications received by the January 15 deadline have been considered. Once the minimum entry requirements are agreed all applicants who have achieved or are predicted to achieve these grades will be made an offer regardless of the date on which they applied. Those who apply later in the cycle may have longer to wait to receive their offer due to the higher volume of applications.

Confirmation of offers takes place in August when examination results become available. Local students who meet a number of specific criteria have the opportunity to take part in an eight week Summer School programme which runs from June to August. If they narrowly miss the conditions of their offer, their Summer School report may be taken into consideration. If there is clear evidence of their ability to cope with work at the level of Year 1 their report may be used to compensate for the lower grade.

## **Student case studies**

**Jenny** is a 17-year-old state school applicant who achieved Scottish Highers at grades AA in Biology and Chemistry and BB in Mathematics and Geography in S5. She is currently in S6 studying Advanced Higher Biology and Highers in Economics and P.E. She applied in December and received an Unconditional Offer in January.

**Brian** is an 18-year-old applicant from an Independent School in England. He is currently studying Biology, Chemistry and English at A Level and is predicted to achieve BBB. He has already met the general requirement of GCSE Grade B in Maths. His application was received on 14 January and he received a conditional offer of BBB in mid-March.

**Lorna** is currently undertaking an Access to Science Programme in a local further education college. The University guarantees progression to the Biological Science degree programmes on the basis of performance against agreed criteria. Lorna applied shortly before the January deadline and her offer was confirmed when her successful report was received in June.

**Rob** is an 18-year-old from a local state school which has a very low rate of progression into higher education. The University pledges to make an offer to all those from Rob's school who have the potential to gain the minimum entry requirements. Rob gained BBC in Biology, Geography and English in S5 and was made a conditional offer. This required him to gain a C in Advanced Higher Biology and BB in Higher Chemistry and Maths. He also elected to take part in a Summer School programme which provided him with the opportunity to develop his learning and study skills and undertake courses in Biology and Chemistry at an equivalent level to those he would encounter in the first year of his degree. When Rob received his results in August he achieved the C in AH Biology and the B in Chemistry but narrowly missed the B in Maths. Rob's place was confirmed on the basis of his Summer School report which demonstrated that he was coping well with advanced level work.