

## Harper and Keele Vet School Admissions Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Harper and Keele Vet School strives to be a place where learning, living and working is a positive experience for all. The Vet School is committed to providing a professional and transparent admissions process. This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined in the guiding principles outlined by the QAA UK Quality Code for HE Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access November 2018, and complies with current legislation affecting the admission of students. The Code's expectation is that: "HE providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully... The application process should be inclusive and allow all prospective students to make an application and receive a fair outcome, regardless of background".

The Harper and Keele Vet School's policies and procedures are also underpinned by the principles set out by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

The Policy ensures that the Vet School works within the guidance for Higher Education providers published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) which enables prospective students to have access to accurate and reliable information and allows them to make informed decisions about higher education.

#### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide:

- i) enquirers, applicants, parents and advisors with clear information regarding the Harper and Keele Vet School's admissions processes;
- ii) a framework for all staff involved in recruitment, selection and the admissions process to ensure consistency and transparency within the admissions process ensuring the interests of applicants are protected.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Vet School's [Student Agreement](#) ('Terms and Conditions'), [Student Protection Plan](#) and [Transfer Policy](#).

This Policy is underpinned by the relevant Universities' strategies, regulations and policies on Data Protection, Safeguarding, and Equality and Diversity.

#### 1.2 Scope

This policy covers the sole Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme for UK, EU and overseas students which is managed by the Harper and Keele Vet School, leading to an award jointly made by Harper Adams University and Keele University

### 2. POLICY

#### 2.1 Application Process

##### Undergraduate

- i) Applications for full time undergraduate programmes at Harper and Keele Vet School should be made normally through UCAS. Specific guidance on applying to Harper and Keele Vet School is on the Vet School website.
- ii) All applications received by the UCAS standard application deadline (15 October) will be guaranteed equal consideration in line with UCAS guidelines.

## 2.2 Consideration of applications

- i) Admissions activities are carried out by the Harper and Keele Vet School, although admissions processing is predominantly administered by the Harper Adams University admissions team, working closely with admissions professionals at Keele University and Vet School admissions tutors.
- ii) Standard entry requirements will be published on the Harper and Keele Vet School webpages and are reviewed on an annual basis.<sup>1</sup>
- iii) The selection process will take in to account:
  - The applicant's potential to succeed in their chosen programme of study;
  - Actual or predicted academic or professional qualifications and grades;
  - Applicants who have followed a non-standard educational route will be considered on an individual basis. Harper and Keele Vet School recognises that standard selection measures may not enable an applicant to demonstrate their suitability and alternative evidence may be requested;
  - Relevant work experience – All applicants must submit an online work experience form by 15 October. The form must be submitted independently of, and in addition to, the UCAS application. The Harper and Keele Veterinary School will not normally contact applicants reminding them to submit the form before the deadline. The form will be available on the Vet School website for the duration of the UCAS application window at the following page: [www.harperkeelelevetschool.ac.uk/](http://www.harperkeelelevetschool.ac.uk/);
  - Applicant's personal statement, which should include information regarding the reasons for applying for the programme, career aspirations and motivation to study;
  - Academic reference(s);
  - Performance at the selection event;
  - Qualifications in English language.
- iv) Where an applicant is unsuccessful with their application to their original choice of course, the admissions team may refer the applicant to an alternative relevant programme at either Harper Adams University or Keele University.
- v) Admissions decisions will be made as quickly as possible where applications are complete.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.3 The Admissions process

The admissions process involves two phases – shortlisting and the selection event.

### Phase 1 – Shortlisting

All applicants will be considered on an equal basis, against criteria which will be determined at the start of the Admissions cycle. Shortlisting for the selection event is based on previous qualifications awarded e.g. GCSEs or equivalent, qualifications currently being taken, work experience, supporting statement and reference. Contextual data will also be taken in to account.

### Phase 2 – Selection event

The final decision on the offer a place will be made entirely on the basis of the selection event.

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<sup>1</sup> It must be noted that the entry requirements in the hard copy of the prospectus may be different to those on the website. The requirements in the prospectus are indicative only and applicants are asked to check the Vet School's website for the up to date information. Any changes to our entry requirements will be finalised by the start of that application cycle (31 August) and will not change after this date.

<sup>2</sup> Where applicants have included all required information on their application, e.g. completed and pending qualifications, personal statement, references and relevant supporting documentation.

- Applicants are called to the selection event on the basis of the standard scoring system used to shortlist applications. Applicants will normally be given at least two weeks' notice of their selection date. If an applicant is unable to attend on the date provided, reasonable steps will be taken to offer an alternative date, if one is available. If an applicant fails to respond to the invitation to a selection event or fails to attend the selection event, their application will normally<sup>3</sup> be rejected.
- The selection event will take place at Harper Adams University.
- The selection event is likely to take place from November to March.
- Each candidate will have a similar structured selection event and be assessed against a standard set of criteria. An assessment form will be completed for each candidate. The assessors are drawn from staff from the Vet School, Harper Adams University, Keele University and practitioners. All staff have undergone specific training for selecting vet school students.
- The selection event will comprise of up to six activities which will include mini interviews and practical tasks. The selection event will take a maximum of 2 hours and 30 minutes.
- After the selection event, applicants will receive the Vet School's decision via UCAS; successful applicants will be invited to attend an Offer Holder Day, at one or both sites.

#### **2.4 Site Preference**

Once an applicant has received an offer, there will be an opportunity to state a preferred site (where they would be based and the university with which they would be registered for statutory reporting purposes) and provide any specific reasons supporting this preference.<sup>4</sup> An applicant's preference and supporting documentation will be considered at confirmation but cannot be guaranteed.

#### **2.5 Deferred Entry**

Requests to defer entry will be considered, but must be made in writing, giving details of the reasons why a deferral is required and must be made by 31 July in the original intended year of entry.

Applicants wishing to defer must have satisfied any conditions of their offer by the end of the original admissions cycle, and are unable to carry forward conditions over in to the following cycle. Students are subject to the fee responsibilities of their year of entry cohort, rather than the admissions cycle in which they gained a place.

#### **2.6 Age**

The Vet School does not consider applications from any applicant under the age of seventeen. Applicants who will turn 18 by the 1<sup>st</sup> May in their first year of study will have their application processed as other applicants. All successful applicants are expected to evidence academic maturity in their application. Applicants who are under eighteen should be aware that they are applying to study in an adult environment and there may be a small number of limitations for them at the Vet School while they are under eighteen.

The Vet School requires parental/carer consent for any student who will be under eighteen at the time of enrolment. However, if a prospective student is living independently and can evidence their independent living status the Vet School will normally not require parental consent. Students under the age of eighteen whose parent/carer does not reside in the UK are required to provide details of a

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<sup>3</sup> Unless the candidate provides evidence of mitigating circumstances that prevented their attendance without notice.

<sup>4</sup> Acceptable reasons are normally limited to ones of disability and long term medical need or care giver responsibilities for those ordinarily resident within 15 miles of their preferred site.

UK based guardian who can act as a contact in case of emergency. For more information please see the relevant [Under 18 Policy and our Safeguarding policy](#).

There is no upper age limit.

## **2.7 International Students**

Applicants who require a visa to study in the UK (Tier 4) cannot be considered at this time as the Harper and Keele Vet School does not yet have formal approval from the UKVI to have students sponsored under Tier 4. Other immigration categories may be considered at the discretion of the Universities.

## **2.8 Resit Examinations and Re-applications**

The Vet School considers applicants who are resitting whole or parts of their qualifications. However, a maximum of one resit is allowed in any one subject.

Applicants who have been unsuccessful in a previous admissions cycle can re-apply (this includes those unsuccessful at interview). It should be noted that having been called for an interview in a previous cycle does not necessarily guarantee an interview in a subsequent cycle, as applications will be assessed in competition with all the other applications of that admissions year.

## **2.9 Re-marks and Examination Appeals**

Confirmation decisions will be made on the basis of the A Level grades published in August. Applicants who don't meet the conditions of their offer and subsequently decide to appeal to the Examination Board for a re-mark must advise the Vet School immediately in writing. While the Vet School will make every effort to reconsider applicants whose grade(s) are subsequently amended as a result of a successful re-mark, this cannot be guaranteed. However, if the Vet School is unable to reconsider because the course is full, an applicant may be offered a deferred entry place.

## **2.10 Readmission to Study**

Former students who wish to be readmitted to study at Harper and Keele Vet School, following a formal withdrawal from their study at Harper and Keele Vet School, will need to reapply. It should be noted that readmission is not automatic and will depend on the circumstances of the individual and the availability of places.

Those students applying for readmission after being withdrawn by the Vet School, either following the decision of an Exam Board or under another Vet School policy or regulation, will not be readmitted.

## **2.11 Equality of Opportunity**

The Harper and Keele Vet School is committed to providing fair access to students from all educational and social backgrounds. To this end contextual data is used in the admissions process.

To be eligible for Widening Participation consideration, applicants require two or more contextual data flags arising from information on your UCAS application. These are based on residential postcode, school performance and time spent in care. For more information please see the Contextual Offers section in the Admissions procedures guide on the Vet School webpages.

## **2.12 Applicants with Disabilities**

- i) The Vet School welcomes applications from students with disabilities or special needs. The Harper and Keele Vet School is committed to giving academic opportunities to all appropriately qualified applicants, irrespective of disability, wherever practical. All applicants are advised to read the RCVS [guidance on the admission of students with disabilities to the professional veterinary degree course](#).

- ii) Applicants who have a disability or health problem which they believe may have an impact on their ability to carry out procedures that are required of a Veterinary Medicine and Surgery student are invited to discuss this with the Vet School prior to making an application.
- iii) Applications from students with disabilities are subject to the same academic selection process as all applications. Discussions about support requirements are separate from the selection process.
- iv) All applicants with an offer will be asked to complete an Occupational Health questionnaire as enrolment on to the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery degree is subject to Occupational Health Clearance.
- v) In the very rare cases whereby the Vet School withdraws an offer of a place on the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery degree, it is likely to be because of one of the following:
  - there are student health and safety concerns
  - while the Vet School is committed to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students, it must ensure that these adjustments do not exceed what would also be considered reasonable within a veterinary practice workplace
  - RCVS regulations which may prevent membership due to particular disability or health problem (please see [HEOPS guidance for more information](#)).

### **2.13 Fitness to Practise/study**

The Veterinary Medicine and Surgery degree is a professional qualification enabling those students who successfully complete to practise as a veterinary surgeon (following registration with the RCVS). This means that some of the training and teaching will be conducted in a professional veterinary practice/hospital setting. Therefore, students must abide by the professional code of conduct set out by the RCVS.

Applicants invited for the selection events will be asked to sign a declaration stating that they consider themselves fit to practise as a Veterinary Surgeon.

For more information regarding the RCVS requirements please see their [Fitness to Practise Guide](#).

### **2.14 Applicants who have submitted extenuating circumstances**

Special consideration will be given to those applicants whose education has been significantly disrupted or disadvantaged through health or personal problems, disability or other circumstances.

Applicants will be required to provide documentary evidence.

### **2.15 Fee Status**

In the majority of cases the Admissions team will be able to determine an applicant's fee status from the information provided on the UCAS application. Where the information is unclear, the Admissions team will ask for further information usually via a fee assessment questionnaire. Applicants may also be required to send in supporting documentation, this may include copies of passports (applicant and parents), employment contracts, Home Office letters and evidence of residency in the UK.

Fee status is determined by the rules set out by the UK government, more information can be found on the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) [website](#).

### **2.16 Applicants with Criminal Convictions**

The Veterinary Medicine and Surgery degree leads to a qualification in a profession that comes under the Notifiable Occupations Scheme. Accordingly, it is in all applicants' and students' interests to advise the Vet School of any criminal convictions so that advice can be provided on the likelihood

that such would disbar the individual from placement opportunities or access to the professional register.

All applicants to the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery degree will be required to disclose any unspent [relevant criminal convictions](#), at post offer stage.

Any applicants who declare a criminal conviction will not automatically have their offer rescinded, but will be asked to provide additional information about the offence(s), including the sentence imposed and for any details regarding the circumstances. There will also be an opportunity to provide the contact details of a referee, such as a probation officer or social worker whom the Vet School can contact for further information.

Following receipt of the information, the Vet School will carry out an appropriate risk assessment, which may be considered by the Criminal Declaration panel administered by Keele University. The panel will consider whether the applicant is likely to be able to have equal access to placement opportunities and practise in the profession after successful completion of the degree and guidance may be sought from the RCVS.

### **2.17 Responsibility of the applicant**

- i) The Vet School expects that an applicant will provide full and accurate information in order to be considered for admission. The Vet School reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if an application is found to be fraudulent or key information has been purposefully omitted. Where the Vet School finds that a student has provided fraudulent or misleading information after enrolment, the Vet School reserves the right to suspend the student pending an investigation, which could result in the student being permanently excluded.
- ii) The Vet School expects applicants to comply with any Fitness to Practise and professional standards.
- iii) All students are required as a condition of their registration to accept the Regulations of the Vet School and the Student Terms and Conditions.

### **2.18 Applicant Conduct**

All applicants of the Vet School are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is responsible and respectful to others, whether they are other applicants, students, members of staff, visitors to the Vet School/University site, placement colleagues or members of the local community. By accepting an offer of a place at the Vet School, students agree to abide by all relevant provisions of the ordinances and regulations of the University which have been designed to support the Vet School's key values.

Where the Vet School believes behaviour is inappropriate and represents a risk to the health, safety or welfare of others or themselves or the reputation of the Universities, the Vet School may decide to rescind the offer of a place.

### **2.19 Feedback and Appeals**

- i) Admissions staff will normally record the reason(s) why an applicant has been unsuccessful and this will be communicated to the applicant.
- ii) We recognise that there may be occasions when applicants will wish to ask for more detailed feedback. In this context, feedback is defined as the communication from the Vet School to an applicant who has been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place. A request for feedback must be made in writing by the applicant and not through a third party.

- iii) An appeal is defined as a request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision. For further information please see our Complaints and Appeals Policy on the Vet School website.

## **2.20 Information received during the admissions cycle**

All applicants, with 'live' applications will be sent relevant information during the admissions cycle. This information will include both relevant information regarding the application as well as details regarding the latest developments at both Universities and the Vet School. All applicants will be sent an email upon receipt of application which sets out the next steps and provides the University Privacy notice detailing how the Vet School will process applicant personal information.

All applicants who receive an offer will receive information in line with the guidance set out by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) for Higher Education providers. This includes Course Information and a 'Terms and Conditions' document detailing the instances where a course may be changed. The document also contains links to policies that are applicable once a student has enrolled, including the Regulations, Attendance Policy and the Student Protection Plan.

## **2.21 Record keeping duties**

The Universities will retain admissions documentation in line with approved Records Management Policy and Retention Schedules.

## **3. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Admissions Policy is underpinned by a number of policies and processes designed to ensure fairness and transparency within its admissions process. These include:

- Admissions procedures
- Under 18 Applicant policy
- Accreditation of Prior Learning
- Interview Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- University Regulations
- Student Agreement – Terms and Conditions
- Records Management Policy
- Data Protection – Layered Notice

## **4. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION**

- *The Vet School Admissions policy will be reviewed annually by the Vet School Admissions and Marketing Communications Group or equivalent, taking in to account any changes to RCVS or other relevant external agency regulations for approval by the Joint Academic Board.*
- *The Vet School Steering Group or equivalent will be responsible for approving this initial policy until such a time as the Joint Academic Board is established.*
- *The Admissions policy will be published on the Harper and Keele Vet School website.*

## 5. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

<b>Document Name</b>	Admissions Policy
<b>Owner</b>	Laura Harper/Jo Ladwa
<b>Version Number</b>	1.0
<b>Equality Analysis Decision and Date</b>	
<b>Approval Date</b>	04.03.19
<b>Approved By</b>	Validation Event
<b>Date of Commencement</b>	01.09.19
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	Not applicable
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	01.09.19
<b>Related Policy Documents</b>	<p>Policies still under development at time of writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions procedures</li> <li>• Under 18 Applicant policy</li> <li>• Accreditation of Prior Learning</li> <li>• Interview Policy</li> <li>• Complaints and Appeals Policy</li> <li>• University Regulations</li> <li>• Student Agreement – Terms and Conditions</li> <li>• Records Management Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection – Layered Notice</li> </ul>
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	Vet School, Admissions