

SOAS Admissions Policy

Notes

All policies must be read in conjunction with all other University policy, procedure and guidance documents.

Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date. Please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website for the latest version.

Undergraduate Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to all categories of applicants to accredited programmes of undergraduate (UG) study and is intended to provide a central framework to inform all policies and procedures involved in recruitment, selection and admissions. SOAS, University of London is committed to the recruitment of students with the greatest academic ability and potential, irrespective of their social, cultural and economic background.
- The university is committed to equality in education and applications are considered on their individual merits, utilising a holistic approach and reviewing all information provided to the College through the application process.
- SOAS is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices and aims to offer clear advice and guidance to prospective applicants to enable them to make informed choices.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 SOAS operates a largely centralised undergraduate admissions process. For the majority of programmes, academic admissions tutors set entry requirements which are then applied by the professional admissions staff who are responsible for processing decisions. Non- standard and marginal applications will be sent to the Admissions Tutor for review.
- 2.2 SOAS Admissions Office staff and Admissions Tutors are provided with regular and detailed training to ensure decisions comply with the Undergraduate Admissions Policy and all related policies.

3. Age requirements

- 3.1 Applicants must be at least 17 years old by 1 September of the year of admission.

- 3.2 This requirement may be waived for applicants who will be 16 years of age on admission, on an individual basis, providing that their parents or guardians have given their written agreement in advance to additional safeguards and requirements. These include acknowledging that the University will not act in "loco parentis."
- 3.3 Applicants under the age of 18 years old as of 1 September of the year of admission will be required to have their parents or guardians provide their written agreement in advance to additional safeguards and requirements. These include acknowledging that the University will not act in "loco parentis."
- 3.4 The University does not operate a maximum age requirement for its programmes of study; however, students must be able to demonstrate the maturity and personal skills, as well as academic potential, required to succeed on a university level course and benefit from a university education.
- 3.5 Mature applicants (aged over 21 on 1 September in the year of admission) who have been out of education for some time will often find an Access course a useful preparation for degree level study. The University recognizes Access courses which are kite-marked for entry to Higher Education. Preference is given to Access courses in the humanities or social sciences over those which have a more specific outcome such as Access to Nursing Studies which is not directly relevant to the degree applied for. Applicants who have taken a directly relevant Access course (such as Access to Law) are preferred for some degrees.

4. Academic Entry Requirements

- 4.1 Applicants are normally required to have pursued a broadly based course of study, with at least three passes at GCE A Level (or equivalent). It is important for candidates to ensure that they will be able to meet the full A level (or equivalent) subject requirements for their chosen degree course.
- 4.2 All subjects at GCE A Level carry equal weight, except for General Studies. The University does not impose a penalty on applicants retaking GCE A Levels.
- 4.3 Offers are normally made in terms of the UCAS tariff. Subjects passed at AS Level, Key Skills, and GCE A Level General Studies provide the University with useful information as to breadth of study and level of achievement, but they are not counted towards the tariff score offer.
- 4.4 SOAS publishes entry criteria on our website, in our Undergraduate Prospectus and external sources of information, advice and guidance (for example, UCAS Entry Profiles).
- 4.5 In line with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) advice to higher education on consumer protection law, the information aims to be accurate, clear, unambiguous and timely. As such, the University aims to avoid altering admissions criteria during the course of the application cycle. However, the Undergraduate Prospectus is prepared more than 18 months prior to entry to a degree programme. Whilst every effort is made to ensure its accuracy, some changes in the subsequent period are inevitable.
- 4.6 SOAS accepts applicants with a wide range of qualifications and publishes the range of qualification equivalences on our website. Where an equivalency has not been published, enquiries to study@soas.ac.uk are welcomed. The University is committed to a regular review of entry requirements. The published entry requirements reflect a typical offer; however, meeting or being predicted to meet this does not guarantee an offer.

5. Subject specific requirements

- 5.1 A Level and GCSE (and equivalents) specific subject requirements for each programme are listed in the prospectus and on the individual programme pages of the SOAS website. If a subject is listed as required at any level, an application will be unsuccessful if this subject has not been listed as completed or pending completion.

English Language requirements

- 6.1 All applicants are required to prove their English language proficiency. Where English is not the first language of the applicant, the University accepts a range of English language qualifications to satisfy the minimum level of competence required. Details on English language requirements can be found on the SOAS website <https://www.soas.ac.uk/international/englishrequirements/>

Application Assessment

- 7.1 SOAS considers all aspects of the application as part of a holistic approach to selection and admissions. This may include the following: achieved and pending academic qualifications; achieved and predicted grades; evidence of English language proficiency; the personal statement or additional information which demonstrates motivation for a programme of study; academic reference and school experience; an applicant's performance at interview; an applicant's sample of written work; the academic and geo-demographic context in which qualifications have been achieved and being completed and/or extenuating or mitigating circumstances.
- 7.2 SOAS may, on occasion, require additional written work or offer applicants the opportunity to provide an additional personal statement. When this is required, the reason for the request will be clearly stated.

8. Application procedure

- 8.1 Applications to all full time undergraduate degree programmes are submitted through Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).
- 8.2 SOAS complies with the UCAS equal consideration guarantee to all applications submitted by the UCAS Equal Consideration deadline. Applications submitted after the UCAS Equal Consideration deadline are considered on an individual basis after all 'on-time' applications have been fully considered. These applications are processed in order of the date they are received. The University reserves the right to close undergraduate programmes to applications at any point after the UCAS Equal Consideration deadline. Many programmes operate on rolling admissions, with decisions being processed from November each year. All decisions are communicated to applicants through UCAS Hub. The University endeavours to adhere to all UCAS decision deadlines.
- 8.3 SOAS may use UCAS Extra, Adjustment and/or Clearing. This information will be available prior to the start of each service.
- 8.4 SOAS welcomes deferred entry applications.
- 8.5 The deadline for offer holders to meet the conditions of their offer is 31 August in the year of application. This is the deadline for SOAS to receive evidence that the conditions of an offer have been met. Applicants who believe they will meet the offer conditions by these deadlines, however will not be able to evidence it, should contact the admissions office as soon as they become aware of this situation.
- 8.6 SOAS reserves the right to withdraw a candidate who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular programme according to individual circumstances.
- 8.7 Applicants should be aware that under the Data Protection Act 1998, SOAS is only able to speak directly with them. The UCAS application's Nominated Access field provides the option for applicants to confirm an adult (teacher, parent or guardian) to act on their behalf and speak directly with the university.
- 8.8 In exceptional circumstances candidates may be considered for exemption from part of a degree on the basis of previous studies. Exemption for more than one year of study is not possible.

9. Contextualised admissions

- 9.1 SOAS may use contextual data to holistically assess an applicant's future potential to succeed. Contextual data includes: the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (this measures relative deprivation across England, considering factors such as income, employment, crime and barriers to housing), the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) score (this looks at how likely young people are to participate in higher education across the UK and how this varies by area), the performance of your school at GCSE, first generation in Higher Education status, percentage of students eligible for free school meals at your school, and care-experienced status.
- 9.2 Contextual data, used to encourage widening participation, helps assess if the applicant should receive a differential offer with grades slightly below our standard entry requirements.
- 9.3 Students participating in the SOAS outreach programmes may receive additional consideration as part of the admissions process.
- 9.4 SOAS is committed to providing fair access and support to applicants who have spent time in local authority care. The term 'care leaver' refers to a young person under the age of 25 who is currently, or has been, in public care for a minimum of three months. It is strongly advised for all care-experienced applicants to disclose this information in their UCAS application to allow the Admissions Office to take these circumstances into consideration. Academic referees are also asked to ensure this information is included in the reference.

10. Mitigating circumstances

- 10.1 SOAS understands circumstances beyond an applicant's control, such as illness or bereavement, may detrimentally affect their academic progress. In such instances, applicants are encouraged to submit details of their mitigating circumstances for consideration by the Admissions Office. Information regarding mitigating circumstances should be submitted as soon as they are known to be affecting, or to have the potential to affect, academic progress.
- 10.2 Although the information regarding mitigating circumstances can serve to contextualise the academic performance, or predicted academic performance of an applicant, the final decisions as to whether to offer the applicant a place on the course, and under what conditions, will remain at the discretion of the university.

11. Disabled applicants

- 11.1 Applications from disabled applicants will be considered based upon academic merit and potential for their chosen programme. Any support needs or adjustments will be considered independently of the admissions decision. Where an applicant believes that their disability has impacted detrimentally upon their academic performance to date, they should notify the Admissions Office.
- 11.2 SOAS' Student Advice and Wellbeing Department provides applicants with information, advice and guidance on disability support issues.

12. Validity of offer

- 12.1 All offers of admission to pursue a programme of study as a student of the University are made by the Academic Registrar or an authorised deputy. In addition, an offer of a place for an undergraduate degree is valid only when confirmed via UCAS. No promise or purported offer made otherwise has any validity.
- 12.2 Offers of admissions are made for a specific entry date.
- 12.3 Unconditional firm offer holders that are unable to enrol by the specified date may apply to have their offer of place deferred to the next year of entry. The deadline to request a deferral is 30 September in the cycle in which you have applied.

- 12.4 Applications for deferral beyond the next entry date, including those for a second deferral, will not be granted, and in these circumstances, applicants are required to submit a fresh application. There is no guarantee that a new application will result in an offer of a place.

13. Unsuccessful applications

- 13.1 SOAS reserves the right to reject applications to study at the University on academic grounds or if the programme applied to has closed to applications, and to give no reasons to such applicants save at its own discretion.
- 13.2 If an application is unsuccessful, a rejection will be confirmed via UCAS.
- 13.3 If an applicant has applied for an Undergraduate degree programme, but does not meet the academic entry requirements, the Admissions Office will consider whether an alternative programme offer can be made for the Foundation Year programme. If such an offer can be made, an alternative offer will be confirmed via UCAS.

Postgraduate Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to all categories of applicants to accredited programmes of postgraduate taught (PGT) study and is intended to provide a central framework to inform all policies and procedures involved in recruitment, selection and admissions. If an applicant has any questions or needs clarification regarding the University's Policy on Admissions, they are welcome to contact the Master's Admissions team.

2. Application Assessment

- 2.1 SOAS believes that a diverse student population contributes to a challenging and stimulating learning environment. We therefore welcome postgraduate applications from all candidates with the potential to succeed in postgraduate studies, whatever their background. We are committed to equality of opportunity and aim to avoid unfair discrimination on any grounds, including disability, gender, age, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- 2.2 SOAS aims to provide accurate information and advice to prospective students concerning the opportunities for postgraduate study at the University. The Postgraduate prospectus is prepared more than 12 months prior to entry; whilst every effort is made to ensure its accuracy some changes in the subsequent period are inevitable. Up to date advice is available from the Student Recruitment or Admissions teams.
- 2.3 SOAS facilitates swift responses to enquiries and applications and ensures that all necessary documentation is sent at the earliest possible time.
- 2.4 The admissions decision rests primarily on the qualifications, needs and aspirations of the applicant, and the educational opportunities available. Applicants selected for admission should be suitably qualified and capable of benefiting from the programme of study.

3. Academic Entry Requirements

- 3.1 Applicants for a taught Masters degree should normally possess at least a 2:2 (Lower Second) class honours degree from a UK university, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the University. Applicants for research degrees should normally possess a UK Masters degree or a qualification deemed equivalent by the University. Applicants who do not possess this level of qualifications may be eligible for consideration for admission to postgraduate programmes on the basis of previous work experience or training. SOAS welcomes applications for taught Masters from students enrolled on International Foundation Programmes for Postgraduate study.

- 3.2 Criteria for entry to individual programmes of study are in addition to the above and may vary. Achievement or predicted achievement of the required qualifications does not guarantee an offer of a place. Each application is considered on its merits and in competition with others. SOAS may take into account examination results already achieved, predicted grades in forthcoming examinations, research project proposals, personal statements and academic references. Any applicant may be asked to attend an interview and/or to submit additional application materials.
- 3.3 Students are only admitted to a research degree where an appropriate supervisor can be identified, and provision can be made for regular supervision throughout the period of registration

4. English Language requirements

- 4.1 All applicants whose first language is not English must meet the University's English language requirements. The University accepts a range of English language qualifications to satisfy the minimum level of competence required. For further details please refer to: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/international/english-language-requirements>

5. Disabled applicants

- 5.1 Applications from students with disabilities are considered on the same academic grounds as all other applicants. Applicants are invited to disclose their disability at the point of application. Applicants can obtain advice concerning the suitability of the campus, the degree programme, equipment and/or support available from the University's Student Disability Advisor. Information regarding disability is sensitive personal data and is subject to the Data Protection Act. SOAS will share disability related admissions information only amongst relevant admissions and disability staff. Applicants may speak to the Student Disability Advisor in confidence if they prefer.

6. Unsuccessful applications

- 6.1 SOAS reserves the right to reject applications to study at the University on academic grounds or if places are no longer available
- 6.2 SOAS reserves the right to withdraw a candidate who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular programme according to individual circumstances.

7. Validity of offer

- 7.1 Offers of admission will include information on the duration of the programme for which the applicant has been accepted and the fee required; all conditions attached to the offer will be specified. An offer of a place is not a guarantee of funding.
- 7.2 Decisions on applications are valid only if communicated by the Postgraduate Admissions team through the online application system.

Applicant Conduct for UG and PG admissions

Prospective students at SOAS are expected to act in a manner consistent with both the SOAS Code of Conduct and the SOAS Charter. Prospective students are expected to read and familiarise themselves with both policies.

SOAS will not tolerate language or behaviour in contravention of our Code or Charter. Hostile, intimidating or discriminatory language or behaviour, whether expressed orally, online or in writing, will be regarded seriously and may adversely affect the consideration of your application. Excessive levels of contact, through email or other means, to an extent that is deemed to be obsessive, harassing or repetitive shall be regarded in a similar manner, potentially adversely affecting a prospective student's application. If we become aware of potential breaches of our codes by prospective students, we may approach them to ask for an explanation of their conduct to assess their suitability for

membership of our community. Where language or behaviour is particularly inappropriate, summary withdrawal of an offer or the rejection of an application may follow, without warning. The University also reserves the right to refer conduct that may constitute a criminal offence to the police.