

## Guidelines for the recruitment of students with a criminal conviction

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*Note: All policies must be read in conjunction with all other SOAS policy, procedure and guidance documents. Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date, therefore please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website or intranet for the latest version.*

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. In accordance with the University's obligations towards students and staff, the university may request information about relevant, unspent criminal convictions during the admissions process so that appropriate steps can be taken to facilitate effective support and/or assess whether an applicant poses an unacceptable risk to students and staff.
- 1.2. The University recognises its duty to protect the SOAS community and the communities around it, and that information regarding an individual's criminal convictions may need to be taken into account when deciding whether that individual may begin or continue their studies.
- 1.3. Having a criminal record does not necessarily preclude an individual from studying at the University. This will depend on the nature of the conviction and the outcome of the review process.
- 1.4. These guidelines are designed to ensure that any applicant who has a criminal record is assessed fairly, considering the interests of the individual concerned, the wider university community, and legislative requirements.
- 1.5. These guidelines should be read in the context of the University's [General and Admissions Regulations](#) and [Admissions Policy](#).
- 1.6. These Guidelines apply to all individuals applying to study at the University, including applications to foundation courses, pre-sessional English, pre-masters, study abroad and exchange programmes, certificates, diplomas, undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research, regardless of duration, mode of study, or qualification level.
- 1.7. These Guidelines apply regardless of how the University becomes aware of an applicant's criminal convictions, and therefore include self-disclosure by the applicant, and/or information received from a third party or in the media.

- 1.8. All information will be handled with the highest levels of confidentiality. Any disclosure, obtained through self-declaration or by other means, will be kept and disposed of in accordance with the SOAS [Data Protection Policy](#) .

## 2. Disclosing Criminal Convictions

- 2.1. For Undergraduate courses, applicants are not required by UCAS to disclose any convictions during the initial application process. The University will ask all offer holders to disclose any unspent criminal convictions once they have accepted their offer from the University.
- 2.2. For Postgraduate courses, applicants are asked whether they have a criminal conviction during the application process.
- 2.3. If it is later discovered that a student had unspent criminal convictions which they did not disclose, this may result in a withdrawal of the application/offer, or in the case of a student already enrolled, action under the Student Disciplinary procedure.

## 3. Review Process

- 3.1 Where a relevant unspent criminal conviction has been declared or comes to the attention of the University, a Criminal Convictions Panel will be convened to consider whether any additional conditions or support should be put in place and to consider any potential risk to the University's community. The Panel will consist of three members of staff, with one from Admissions and the remaining two from another department, including but not limited to Academic Registry, an Academic Departments, Student Casework, Governance, Legal, and/or Student and Academic Services.
- 3.2 The Panel may request further information from the applicant such as a:
- statement from the Probation Service, Social Services or senior prison officer;
  - character reference from a member of staff at the applicant's school or equivalent;
  - statement from the applicant setting out any information which he/she considers to be relevant to the decision.
- 3.3 When reviewing a criminal conviction, the Panel will consider:
- The nature of the offence(s);
  - The time that has passed since the offence was committed;
  - Any additional information, such as the Probation Service, Social Services or senior prison officers, in the form of independent references or reports;
  - If more than one offence was committed, whether each was a separate offence or part of a series of similar offences; and
  - The potential impact on fellow students, staff and others with whom the applicant will have contact.
- 3.4 Depending on the outcome of the Panel's risk assessment, an applicant's admission may be confirmed but conditions may be imposed, for example, a prohibition on residing in a student hall of residence and/or mandatory appointments with student support services. An Application may be rejected, or an offer may be withdrawn, if the seriousness of the conviction warrants concerns for the community's welfare and safety or the support required is deemed unreasonable by the Panel.