

## Undergraduate Admissions Statement - School of Earth Sciences

### 1. Admissions process

The admissions team comprises the Admissions Tutor, Dr. Mary Benton; the Deputy Admissions Tutor, Prof. Tim Elliott and the Admissions Administrator, Mrs. Ann Morgan-Davies. Approximately fifteen members of academic staff in the School assist in hosting applicants and their parents on departmental open days; the Admissions Tutor has a briefing meeting with these at the beginning of the academic session.

- All UCAS forms are considered independently by two members of the admissions team.
- All applications are considered on an equal basis. Forms are not segregated by the type of educational institution attended.
- All applicants are contacted within 4 weeks of receipt of application, to establish contact and inform the applicant of the process to be followed (*or alternative arrangements*).
- The School grades applicants as received into three categories: applicants with high grades or predictions, to whom offers may be made immediately; applicants who are good but not stellar who are pooled and subsequently made offers in order of merit; applicants with inappropriate subject choices and/or poor predictions who are rejected.
- Decisions to make offers are based on the UCAS forms, and offers are made to those who have chosen the most appropriate A level subjects and who show potential, appear to be well-motivated and are likely to achieve the standard offer.

Applicants are invited to open days as offers are made to them. All who have applied within the standard time frame are able to arrange an alternative day if that offered is not convenient.

Departmental Open Days provide applicants with the chance to explore the academic opportunities offered by the School, and to discuss their application individually or in a small group with a member of staff. Candidates who live abroad or a great distance from Bristol are not expected to attend an open day, though they are advised they are welcome to if they wish. Others who are unable to attend an open day for a good reason will have their offers confirmed.

Mature applicants, and others who have come through a non-standard route, are required to attend an open day and a competitive interview. The aim of the interview is to discern the applicant's knowledge level, and ability to apply that knowledge to essential situations. Such applicants tend to be invited later in the admissions cycle to enable them to gain the maximum benefit possible from their e.g. Access to Science course prior to assessment.

All interviews are conducted by 2 people, at least one of whom has been trained in fair and effective recruitment techniques, and are undertaken in accordance with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

If A-levels or equivalent are not offered, applicants are required to sit a test involving basic science and quantitative skills. The purpose of the test is to ensure that applicants have enough knowledge and understanding of physical science to enable them to start a degree from a knowledge base comparable to that of their peers.

Mature applicants may be admitted with slightly lower grades than the standard offer, particularly if they have had a relevant employment history.

International applicants with A-levels or equivalent are admitted on the same basis as home applicants. Those for whom English is not their first language must fulfil language entry requirements, usually IELTS 6.5 overall with minimum 6.0 in all bands, or equivalent.

Those seeking to defer entry are welcomed, though in fairness to those unwilling or unable to defer, no more than 10% of places in any year are filled by those deferring. Applicants wishing to defer must supply sound reasons for doing so in their personal statements.

Applicants for VL4P and VL4Q are considered by representatives from the School of Earth Sciences and the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, and joint open days are run.

Applicants for CF16 and FC61 are selected entirely by the School of Earth Sciences, and are invited to specific open days.

## 2. Criteria for assessing applicants

### Entry Requirements

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Bacc, 14-19 Diploma, GCSEs) can be found in the online Undergraduate Prospectus (<http://www.bris.ac.uk/prospectus/undergraduate/2012>). Other qualifications, including international qualifications, will be considered on their individual merits; further information is available at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international/study-at-bristol/how-to-apply/country-specific/>.

### Academic Record Criteria

- Our standard offer is AAB, to include at least two science subjects. One of these must be from the following group: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths and Further Maths. The more of these subjects offered by an applicant, the more likely they are to be made an offer.
- The higher the AS grades attained, the more likely it is that an offer will be made. Other science subjects include Geology, Geography, Psychology and Environmental Science.
- A broad scientific background is essential, and for this reason we would advise you not to take Geology and Geography, or Environmental Science and Geography/Biology.
- GCSE Maths, Sciences and English should be A\*-B grades.
- We would rather see three high grade passes than four slightly weaker passes.

We recognise that many applicants do not have the opportunity to study more than three subjects to A level.

### Contextual information

- We take an holistic approach to all applications, ensuring that the educational and social context in which an applicant applies is taken into consideration, where supported by clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic achievement. This may include time spent in Local Authority care, information about which is provided in the UCAS application.
- We also consider evidence of clear motivation to study. This may include attendance at a University summer school, a targeted Access Scheme (such as Access to Bristol), or participation in Aimhigher outreach activities. Consideration will also be given to applicants who have completed a targeted Access scheme at another university, under the 'Mutual Recognition Scheme'.
- We do not take the following into consideration when making admissions decisions: the school type attended by an applicant or whether an applicant's parent has any experience of higher education.

### Personal Statement Criteria

- Interest in and commitment to Earth Sciences
- Evidence of clear thinking & understanding
- Problem-solving, analytical & practical skills
- Appropriateness of chosen programme of study to declared interests & aspirations
- Non-academic achievement/experience, extra-curricular activities, positions of responsibility
- Other relevant skills, e.g. foreign languages
- Relevant work experience
- Relevant reading/research beyond A-level syllabus

- Written English, expression, construction, argument
- Responses to opportunities & challenges faced

Anything else applicant considers relevant.

### Reference Criteria

- Referees should note that the reference would be used as a basis for the assessment of academic performance and as support for the personal statement. Assessors will want to consider the accuracy and consistency of the predicted grades in the light of previous GCSE and AS level achievement (or reasons why this is not the case), evidence of effort and a positive attitude towards studies, motivation, suitability for university education, and any educational or special circumstances.

### Criteria for international applicants (if different)

- English Language requirements can be found in the UG Prospectus (<http://www.bris.ac.uk/prospectus/undergraduate/2012>) and at: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/policies/admissions/language-requirements.html>.

Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability or age.

### **3. Offers**

Typical offers for A-levels and other UK qualifications can be found in the Entry Data in the online UG Prospectus (<http://www.bris.ac.uk/prospectus/undergraduate/2012>). Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will be made equivalent to the published A-level offer.

#### Variations in offer level

We may make lower offers based on whether an applicant is deemed to have experienced educational disadvantage, as defined in section 7.5 of the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures.

### **4. Other**

Applicants to all of our programmes must enjoy being outdoors, whatever the weather, as fieldwork is an important method of study and learning.

The standard offer for all our programmes is the same, and so applicants may change their single honours programme of study at any time prior to registration. Single Honours students have a common first year of study and so may change programme prior to the start of their second year, subject to relevant academic criteria being met.

Occasional transfers from other universities are possible as long as the material studied in a first year elsewhere is comparable to that studied by our first years. Each case is treated individually.