

The University of Manchester

Applicant Admissions Fraud Prevention Procedure

1. General Principles

This procedure outlines how the University will verify information provided in support of an application to a programme of study, a Student visa application or a tuition fee status assessment. The procedure is applicable to any person once they have submitted an application to study at the University, for any level of study, prior to the point of registration, whether submitting their application directly to the University, or via a third party such as UCAS or DfE Apply.

The University is committed to ensuring that applicants are admitted to the University on the basis of accurate, genuine and complete information. This procedure provides information on how the University will investigate suspected cases of admissions fraud and the possible consequences.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the information they provide is accurate and complete and does not contain false or misleading information. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide additional information or their consent for the University to verify via a third party when requested to do so. If we determine that the applicant, or any person or body acting on their behalf, has provided us with information in connection with their application to the University which is fraudulent, untrue, inaccurate, incomplete and/or misleading, the University reserves the right to cancel the application, withdraw an offer of a place or terminate the student contract (in cases where the applicant has accepted an offer but not yet registered).

The University reserves the right to:

- Request an applicant's formal written consent to verify an application directly with the university, awarding organisation, test provider or school either independently or via a recognised University partner such as [HEDD](#) or [Qualification Check](#)
- Request additional information from an applicant in order to verify the information in, or documentation submitted in support of, an application or tuition fee assessment
- Request to see original academic transcripts or certificates for qualifications listed in the admissions application
- Suspend the application process while investigating an alleged fraudulent application and/or plagiarism
- Withdraw an application or offer of a place if it is proven or if it is determined, on the balance of probabilities, that the applicant or someone acting on their behalf, has committed admissions fraud
- Withdraw an application or offer of a place should an applicant refuse or fail to provide the requested information in a reasonable time period
- Impose a permanent exclusion on an applicant's admission to the University for any course or programme of study.

2. Relevant contract and policy provisions

The University Ordinance XVI: The Admission and Registration of Students stipulates:

Section 1:

Admission to the University is subject to the requirement that the student will comply with the University's registration procedures and will duly observe the laws of the University.

Section 2:

Before being admitted to a programme of study in the University, applicants must satisfy the particular requirements for the programme to which entry is sought, which will include acceptable levels of literacy and numeracy, and disclose all relevant facts and information having a bearing on their application for admission.

Section 7:

The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of a student who is subsequently discovered to have omitted or falsified relevant facts or information in connection with his or her application, in contravention of paragraph 2 of this Ordinance.

The Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy states at section 19.2. Fraud, Omission, and Plagiarism that:

Applicants may not omit any requested or relevant information, make any misrepresentation (for example, through plagiarism) or give false information at any point of the application process including after an offer is made. Should this occur The University reserves the right under the provisions of Ordinance XVI to dismiss your application, withdraw an offer of a place and/or revoke your registration. The University may also, in accordance with its obligations, notify external organisations about any suspected misrepresentation.

Scanned copies of documents are generally accepted during the admission process, but original documents can be requested at any stage. Decision makers are trained in detecting and dealing with fraudulent documents. Academic Schools and Divisions may ask to see original documents as part of the admissions selection process or at registration.

In respect of the period between an applicant accepting an offer and enrolling as a student, the Student Terms and Conditions provide (at section 8.1.1 (b) (i)) that the University may terminate the contract and the student's application to the University, or registration as a student, with immediate effect in writing:

If, following your acceptance of an offer and prior to your enrolment as a student, we become aware of new and materially significant information which causes us to determine that it is inappropriate for you to study on the Programme and/or be enrolled as a student. For example:

i. If we determine that you have provided us with information which is fraudulent, untrue, inaccurate, incomplete and/or misleading

[...]

Should any of the concerns identified in section 8.1.1(b) arise, an Admissions Review Panel will meet, and we will follow a fair process which will include appropriate engagement and consultation with you about the concerns (during which you will have an opportunity to respond and provide any relevant

evidence for consideration), prior to any decision being made.

3. Definitions

Definition of fraud

Fraud is deemed to have been committed when a person, or someone acting on their behalf, makes a dishonest representation for their own advantage or to cause another a loss, or dishonestly neglects to disclose information when they had a duty to do so. In respect of admission to the University, fraudulent activity could include giving false information in an application regarding qualifications or experience, providing a fake certificate or reference to support an application, supplying misleading information on tuition fee status, deliberately omitting relevant information such as information relating to previous qualifications, or committing some other act of deception in order to gain admission to the University.

Definition of plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using ideas, words, or creations from either humans or digital systems, such as generative artificial intelligence, without proper attribution or permission and presenting them, either intentionally or unwittingly, as one's own work. Plagiarism encompasses a range of practices beyond just verbatim (word for word) copying. It also includes instances of close paraphrasing, minimal adaptation, and other actions that involve reproducing the work of another source in a way that means the assessed work lacks appropriate originality or proper referencing.

Definition of verification

Verification is the process by which the University confirms the authenticity and validity of an applicant's academic and non-academic credentials. This may include, but is not limited to, checking original certificates, transcripts, references, English language test results, residency and immigration documentation and other required documentation. The purpose of verification is to ensure that all admissions decisions are based on genuine and accurate information, in line with University entry requirements and regulatory obligations.

4. Scope

This procedure applies to cases of suspected fraud discovered at the admission stage for applicants to undergraduate, postgraduate (taught and research), continuing professional development and includes distance, blended and online learning programmes. This procedure does not cover suspected fraud in the admissions process which is discovered after an applicant has registered as a student. Those cases will be managed in accordance with Detecting and Dealing with Fraudulent Applications – Registered Students procedure.

The University has additional procedures for Registered Students covering suspected cheating or plagiarism in examinations and assessed coursework. Guidance to students on plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice can be found on our [Regulations pages](#).

5. Verification

Verification is the process for checking the authenticity of information provided by the applicant in support of their application. The scope of the information under verification can include personal information concerning identity, residency and immigration status, tuition fee status, qualifications awarded, personal statements, references, and any other evidence presented by the applicant.

Scanned copies of documents are generally accepted during the admission process to verify the information in an application, but original documents can be requested at any stage. Admission decision makers are trained in detecting and dealing with fraudulent documents. Admissions teams may ask to see original documents as part of the admissions selection process, during the admissions process, at registration or during the programme of study.

Fraudulent, incorrect, or misleading information is normally detected before making a formal offer, confirming a place, or issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). Where University staff have reason to believe that the information supplied as part of the application process (including in support of a visa application and as part of a tuition fee assessment) is false, incorrect, or misleading, the University will seek to verify the information provided, either with the applicant or, with the applicant's consent, any other person, or organisation, able to attest to the accuracy and/or validity of the information provided. If an applicant does not give consent for this verification to be undertaken, their application and/or any offer made may be withdrawn.

The University works closely with other universities, UCAS, its contracted international education advisers and other recognised bodies including our verification partner Qualification Check to identify patterns of fraudulent activity in admissions. As result, the University will undertake proactive verification checks of particular cohorts of applicants or of specific qualifications to monitor its exposure to such fraudulent activity. An applicant subject to these checks will be asked for their consent to a verification check and if consent is not given, their application and/or any offer made may be withdrawn.

6. Verification of qualifications and references

Undergraduate Entry

The majority of Level 3 qualifications (such as A Levels and T Levels) are confirmed via UCAS, and references are usually submitted direct to UCAS rather than being submitted by the applicant.¹ Where a qualification is not confirmed via UCAS, the admissions team for the academic School or Department is responsible for confirming the validity of documents supporting an application for undergraduate entry.

Postgraduate (Taught or Research) Entry

Applications for postgraduate Taught or Research, continuing professional development and visiting student programmes are made directly to the University and are considered and processed by the admissions team for the relevant academic School, Department or Doctoral College. The admissions team is responsible for confirming the validity of documents supporting an application for postgraduate study.

English Language qualifications

¹ A list of those qualifications confirmed by UCAS is available at:

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/clearing-and-results-day/results-day/sending-exam-results>

Where an English language qualification such as IELTS, TOEFL or PTE Academic is required, the validity of these qualifications will be verified directly with the awarding body.

Verification of examination results

For all examinations (with the exception of those confirmed via UCAS for undergraduate applicants), applicants must send a copy of their official exam results to the appropriate admissions team so that these can be assessed and verified. Electronic copies of all supporting documents, such as transcripts and degree certificates are acceptable, and these will be checked by admissions staff and formally verified. The University reserves the right to ask applicants to provide original paper copies of supporting documents if required.

Where there is concern that an applicant has supplied fraudulent information, the University will seek to verify the information provided, either with the applicant or any other person, or organisation, able to attest to the accuracy and/or validity of the information provided. Wherever possible, this will happen before the offer of a place is confirmed and the student is allowed to register.

All cases of suspected fraud will be referred to the Student Admissions Team in the Directorate for Student Experience (DSE) for further investigation. It is essential that any case of suspected fraud is investigated promptly to maintain the integrity of the admissions process.

While a case of suspected fraud is being investigated, the application will be put on hold and an explanatory note added to the notes field of the application in the University's student records system.

While an application is on hold, no offer will be made to the applicant, and no information regarding UKVI sponsorship will be provided, until the investigation is complete, and only then if it is found that there is no evidence of admissions fraud.

Use of external verification systems

The University will use external verification systems to verify a range of tests and qualifications. This includes but is not limited to the use of verification services belonging to examination bodies such as the International Baccalaureate Organisation and WAEC; to English Language test providers such as IELTS and TOEFL and to services offering at-source verification for all levels of qualification such as Qualification Check.

7. Investigation of suspected fraud

The process of investigation may vary according to the nature of the suspected fraud. However, it may include:

- Requesting further information from the applicant to verify their documentation provided in the admissions process.
- Requesting certified copies of supporting documents, if not already received.
- Seeking confirmation from a third party, such as an awarding institution or an external verification service to confirm the applicant's grades or attendance. In the case of visiting students, contacting the applicant's home institution for verification of documentation, applicant's grades, attendance, etc.
- Contacting the referee to confirm information provided or to check authenticity.

Following investigation, if parts of the application cannot be verified, the applicant will be informed in writing and given the opportunity to provide further supporting information. The applicant will usually be given 10 working days to respond to this request. The timeframe may be shorter if we are near to the issue of Confirmation of Acceptance (CAS) for Student visa applications or the University registration deadline.

If no response is received by the end of the 10-working day period, the application will usually be withdrawn. If an offer has been made but not yet accepted, this may be withdrawn. The applicant will be informed in writing of this outcome by the admissions team for the academic School/Department or the Student Admissions Team.

On completion of the investigation, the Student Admissions Team will determine whether the admissions documentation is valid.

If it is determined that the admissions documentation is valid, this outcome will be communicated to the applicant, and the application will be considered against the standard admissions criteria. If an offer has been made but not yet accepted, the offer will remain open the applicant.

If the Student Admissions Team is unable to verify the admissions documentation, the application, or the offer if this has been made but not yet accepted, will be withdrawn.

Applicants who have accepted an offer but have not yet enrolled

Where it is determined, on the balance of probabilities, that an applicant has submitted fraudulent information at the admissions stage, after they have accepted an offer but prior to their enrolment, the University may terminate its contract with the applicant.

An Admissions Review will take place and will follow a fair process which will include appropriate engagement and consultation with the applicant before a decision is made.

The Admissions Review will be led by the Student Admissions Team, and the final outcome will be determined by the DSE Admissions Manager (or their nominee).

Possible outcomes of the Admissions Review could include:

- a. A request for further information/documentation from the applicant, after which a further investigation and an additional review of the evidence will take place.
- b. If after the Admissions Review, the University is satisfied that the admissions documentation is valid and applicant, or someone acting on their behalf, has not committed admissions fraud, the offer and place on the programme will remain open to the applicant.
- c. If admissions fraud is admitted or the Admissions Review determines that admissions documentation is not valid and that, on the balance of probabilities that the applicant, or someone acting on their behalf, has committed admissions fraud, the University may terminate its contract with the applicant. If an applicant has been issued with a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), this will be withdrawn and the UK Visa and Immigration Office (UKVI) informed.
- d. If after the Admissions Review, the University determines that the applicant was not aware fraudulent documentation was submitted on their behalf, and they have suitable genuine

qualifications for entry to the programme which can be verified in time, the offer will remain open to the applicant. If there is not sufficient time to verify the qualifications before start date of the programme, the applicant's place may be deferred to next academic year. In those circumstances, they will receive a new offer letter, which will set out the tuition fee applicable to that year entry. The Student Terms and Conditions for the year of entry will also apply.

The applicant will be informed in writing the outcome of the Admissions Review by the Student Admissions Team. Where required, the University will also inform relevant bodies such as UCAS or the UKVI of their decision and evidence they have obtained.

8. Verification of identity at interview

Any applicant invited to attend an interview as part of the admissions process may be asked to provide government issued photographic identification e.g., passport, driving licence to verify their identity.

9. Plagiarised UCAS Personal Statements

All personal statements supporting applications to higher education processed through UCAS are checked by a similarity detection system. Each incoming personal statement is compared against a library of personal statements already in the UCAS system, and a library of sample statements collected from a variety of websites and other sources, including paper publications. After it has been processed, each new personal statement is added to the library.

Any statements showing a potential level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service. Institutions are notified of any cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect collusion. Applicants are also notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection Service has identified their personal statement as potentially plagiarised. The decision about what action, if any, will be taken regarding notified cases of plagiarism rests with individual institutions.

Further information regarding the UCAS Similarity Detection Service is available from [UCAS](#).

Process following a UCAS potential plagiarism alert.

UCAS notifies the University's Student Admissions team in the Directorate for Student Experience (DSE) of potential plagiarism. The Student Admissions team will forward this information to the relevant academic School/Department for consideration.

For some academic Schools/Departments any personal statements which having been identified by the UCAS similarity detection service will result in an unsuccessful decision, irrespective of the percentage of similarity detected, or whether we have used the applicant's personal statement in the selection process. If this is the procedure it will be stated on the University course 'How to Apply' pages for the programme of study.

For other academic Schools/Departments, the department may email the applicant to invite them to provide a new personal statement and to indicate the reason why their application has been picked up by the Similarity Detection Service. The applicant will be given 10 working days from the date of the email to respond.

If no reply is received by that date, or the applicant declines to provide a new personal statement, the University will regard the applicant as having withdrawn their application and will record the appropriate decision at UCAS and on the University's student records system.

There may be a reason for the similarity in content. For example, the applicant may have copied material from templates, websites or reference sources or had help to write the personal statement.

In order for the admissions team in the academic School/Department to assess the application further, the applicant should:

- Tell us why the personal statement contains sentences that UCAS has seen before.
- Provide a new personal statement, which we will consider in place of the one which contains the similar material. The statement must be all the applicant's own work. We may also check this new statement for plagiarism.

The University will consider the applicant's response carefully and decide whether or not to progress the application. If an applicant has already been made an offer, the University will decide whether that offer will stand.

If the application is for a professional regulated programme (for example Law, Nursing, Medicine etc.) we will also consider the response in terms of required standards of professional conduct.

10. Anti-fraud checks post-registration

The University may, at any time, request to examine the original documents used by a current registered student in support of their application to study at the University. Such documents may include transcripts, qualification certificates and passports.

Such a request does not necessarily indicate that the University suspects the student to have used fraudulent documents to obtain entry to the University and is part of the University's standard anti-fraud procedures.

If a student is required to present these original documents, they must do so. The student will be given a minimum of five working days to present the documents (or provide an acceptable reason why an extension is required) and will be informed when and where these should be presented. This will normally be the relevant academic School, Department or Doctoral College office or the DSE Admissions team.

The receiving office may retain the documents for up to three working days in order to conduct anti-fraud checks. The office will provide the student with a receipt indicating which original documents have been provided.

11. Appeals

Any applicant whose application, offer of a place is withdrawn, or contract terminated after accepting the offer but prior to enrolment, within the scope of this procedure can submit an appeal against the outcome.

It will not be a reconsideration of the case a fresh but to check that the Applicant Admissions Fraud Prevention Procedure has been properly followed, and that the decision made was reasonable based on all the evidence that was available. The grounds for submitting an appeal are:

- Procedural error or irregularity in the application of the procedure. That the Detecting and Dealing with Fraudulent Applications – Registered Students procedure was not followed properly, and this has affected the outcome.
- That the decision made by the panel was unreasonable in view of all of the circumstances and the evidence that was available at the time.
- That there is new evidence that could not be presented earlier for a good reason, and that has a material impact on the decision under appeal.

An applicant can submit an appeal up to 10 working days after being sent the outcome. Any appeal received after this time will only be considered if there is a good reason for the delay (supported with evidence).

The Head of Student Admissions and Administration (or someone they have nominated) will first check that the appeal has been made on an eligible ground, and if not, will inform the applicant in writing explaining the reason why. If it is eligible, the appeal will be considered by Head of Student Admissions and Administration (or someone they have nominated) who has had no prior involvement in the case.

During the appeal consideration, the applicant may be asked for further information. If they are asked for more information, they will have up to 10 working days to respond. Additional information may also be requested from the admissions team in the School/Department or Doctoral Academy, or Faculty, the DSE Student Admissions team or from other areas of the University.

The appeal outcome will either confirm the decision outcome or uphold the appeal with whatever outcome is considered appropriate. The appeal consideration will normally be completed within 20 working days. If the decision is confirmed and the appeal is not upheld, the applicant will be sent a letter at the conclusion of the process.

Any appeal should be submitted as a written statement enclosing a copy of the applicant's outcome letter. The appeal must detail the reasons for the appeal, the ground(s) on which it is made and enclose any new evidence (where applicable), and must be submitted to the Applicant Appeals and Complaints Team (applicantappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk) within 10 working days from the outcome letter.

12. Storage and Processing of Information

All information provided in relation to this Procedure will be used solely for the purpose of handling fraudulent applications, in accordance with Procedure outlined above.

The University's [Privacy Notice – prospective students, applicants and offer-holders](#) explains how we collect, maintain and use personal data when you make enquiries about studying at The University of Manchester (including by registering to attend our open days), make an application and if you go on to become an offer holder i.e. the time before you become a registered student.

On an annual basis, anonymous statistical information on Fraudulent Applications will be compiled and reported to the University’s Admissions Operational Management Group (AOMG).

13. Accessibility

The University endeavours to ensure that this Admissions Fraud Prevention procedure remains easily located and accessible to applicants via the University website. It will also be provided in writing and (where necessary) verbally, to any Applicant who specifies their intention to register a formal complaint.

Document Control Box	
Procedure title	Admissions Fraud Prevention Procedure
Date approved	10 th December 2025
Approving body	Admissions Operational Management Group (AOMG) (21 st October 2025) Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Implementation Group (TLSiG) (10 th December 2025)
Version	1
Supersedes	
Next review date	October 2026
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	Statute XXI and Ordinance XVI (The Admission and Registration of Students)
Equality relevance outcome	High
Related policies and procedures	Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy Detecting and Dealing with Fraudulent Applications – Registered Students Procedure Applicant Appeals and Complaints Procedure
Related guidance and/or codes of practice	
Policy Owner	Head of Student Admissions and Administration
Lead Contact	Admissions Officer (Training, Policy and Governance), DSE Admissions