Policy 015: Admissions Policy

1.   Purpose and Scope

1.1 This Policy outlines the open, transparent and accessible way in which ACM approaches student admission on to Higher Education Programmes (Degrees) and Further Education Courses (Diplomas).

2.   Policy Statement

2.1 ACM ensures that student admissions are facilitated by professional admissions staff, in liaison with senior academic staff, to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of applicants for entry to programmes of study. Due regard is given to the potential of the applicant to be successful in their chosen programme of study.

2.2 Entry requirements and selection criteria will not exclude or favour applicants on grounds relating to:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Sex
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

2.3 It is the responsibility of the applicant to be confident that they can cope with the practical and physical demands of the course, accepting such changes as would constitute reasonable adjustments in case of disability.

Further Education (FE) Courses

2.4 Diploma qualifications offered by the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) are of the Diploma Level 2 and 3 standard, and validated by the University of the Arts London (UAL). Students who have followed the UK route to a Further Education qualification will therefore normally be at least 16 years of age on admission.

Higher Education (HE) Programmes

2.5 Degree Qualifications offered by the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) meet UK Higher Education academic standards.

2.6 ACM recognises, however, that applicants will be at different stages of maturity and prior learning irrespective of age on application and will judge each application on its individual merits.

Applicants

2.7 ACM will consider each application in a fair, efficient and transparent manner.

2.8 ACM will treat all applicants and students equally. All applicants must meet the prescribed course entry requirements, and will be selected on the basis of demonstration of

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an acceptable level of ability within the course specific Selection Criteria. Over and above this, the needs of each applicant who declares a learning need or disability will be investigated and negotiated with the individual on a case by case basis to ensure that any reasonable adjustments are made to ensure they will not be disadvantaged.

2.9 Places on ACM courses are limited. Offers will be made to applicants with the highest academic and/or professional potential.

2.10 Applications and enrolments may be accepted after the commencement of the course however, it should be ensured that students are in attendance by teaching week 4 of the academic term.

Entry Requirements

2.11 Basic entry requirements for all ACM courses and programmes are set out in the ACM Prospectus. ACM welcomes applications for its Degree programmes from those who might not have formal qualifications. This could relate to those who did not achieve Level 3 qualifications (such as 'A' levels), as well as those who may have completed non-traditional forms of education that do not result in a formal academic award. Consideration will be given to applicants who do not hold prescribed entry requirements but who can demonstrate their suitability and preparedness to undertake the programme of study for which they have applied. This may be assessed through Recognition/Accreditation of Prior Learning or consideration of a 'Concessionary Entry Task'.

2.12 Further Education: for Accreditation of Prior Learning please refer to the ACM Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy & Procedure document.

2.13 Higher Education: For Recognition of Prior Learning please refer to the Middlesex University Recognition of Prior Learning Policy & Procedure document, and Falmouth University's Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy document.

Selection of applicants

2.14 Over and above the Entry Requirements for the course, Programme Managers will exercise discretion in the selection process based on the UCAS Application proforma (for Degree Programmes), or Application pro forma documents (For Diploma courses) and/or Auditions and/or Interviews.

2.15 For each course, selection criteria enable Programme Managers to select the most suitable applicants who meet the entry requirements for the course. The selection criteria will be used by all trained tutors involved in the selection process for a programme of study to ensure consistency.

2.16 Admissions/Auditions and Interview documentation is completed to ensure effective and accurate communication of decisions from Programme Managers to Registry staff.

2.17 Applicants will be sent Audition guides specific to their study route. Details of the audition and selection guidance provides in depth details of the audition requirements.

Auditions/Videos and Interviews/Telephone Interviews

2.18 ACM courses and programmes require applicants to be auditioned and/or interviewed.

2.19 The audition and interview process allows the applicant to visit the ACM campus, where the majority of scheduled learning activities will take place, to meet tutors and students and to discuss the suitability of the course in relation to their needs and career aspirations. It is intended as a two-way exchange of information and questions.

A structured interview framework, with questions determined to enable selection of appropriate applicants, ensures that all interviewees have a comparable experience and are assessed equitably.

2.20 The audition enables the candidate to demonstrate their potential to undertake and be successful in the course for which they have applied.

2.21 Both the audition and interview provide opportunities for ACM Staff to assess more closely the suitability of the applicant for the programme of study.

2.22 All applicants will be invited to attend an audition or interview and will be sent an audition confirmation email that will have a link to with audition guidelines for what to expect from the day along with additional information on what to prepare.

2.23 Interviews/Auditions may exceptionally be conducted via Skype if the applicant is unable to attend an audition or interview due to location or personal circumstances.

2.24 Interviews and auditions during Clearing will be held via Skype where the applicant will be asked to prepare and perform a song of their choice, or they will be asked to provide digital submissions of some sample pieces that they have worked on.

Consideration of Applications

2.25 All applications submitted by the date specified on the ACM live website, or in UCAS publicity, will be given equal consideration.

2.26 Programme Managers will not allocate all available places before the equal consideration deadline set by UCAS for receipt of applications (normally in January each year).

2.27 After the UCAS deadline for equal consideration, any applications for September of that year will be deemed late, and applications will be processed on a first come first served basis and invited to attend an audition or interview accordingly.

2.28 If all places on an FE Course or Degree Programme are allocated, any further successful applicants will be put on a waiting list and notified if a place becomes available. This is operated on a first come first serve basis.

2.29 The outcome of an audition will usually be communicated to applicants verbally at the end of their audition / interview, with successful applicants given an ACM "success" letter. The verbal offer, whether conditional or unconditional with the audition outcome informing the offer basis will then be followed up in writing within two working days. This will be sent via email in the form of a digital contract. UCAS track will also be updated by ACM

Admissions Officers to reflect the offer status, if the student is applying via UCAS for an HE Programme.

2.30 Where the admissions process includes an audition, notification will normally be made within two weeks of the audition date. The notification will inform applicants of details regarding time, date and location of the audition, as well as providing guidance regarding requirements needed to be demonstrated within the audition.

Criminal Convictions

2.31 Applicants are required to disclose any unspent convictions.

2.32 Applications from candidates with criminal convictions will receive careful consideration by the Senior Management Team (SMT). Applicants must, upon request, provide full details of any/or all convictions they may have disclosed under point 2.31 above.

2.33 ACM reserves the right to reject any applicant with a criminal conviction or any applicant who may jeopardise the security, safety or reputation and integrity of ACM or its community, or where there are other relevant professional considerations.

Staff Development and Training

2.34 The Education Management team and Admissions Manager will ensure that all tutors and Admissions staff involved in the selection of applicants are trained in ACM's specific audition and admission procedures and selection criteria, and familiar with ACM's course offerings.

2.35 Provision is made within the budget for administrative staff to attend external training such as;

- Equality and Diversity - opportunities and challenges in HE admissions
- International admissions
- HE networking events

2.36 Internal training for Admissions staff will be provided by the Admissions Manager on any new programmes, processes or policies to ensure that all staff are informed of any new changes or developments.

2.37 Written guidance is provided to tutors responsible for the auditions of applicants onto courses and programmes at ACM. Guidance is discipline specific…(more needed on this). The guidance is reviewed annually to ensure the content is current and valid and aligned with professional standards.

'Clearing'

2.38 Clearing is a part of the UCAS university application process. It is a way for universities to fill any spaces they have left for the new academic year. It gives applicants who do not hold an offer another chance of finding a university place.

2.39 ACM will participate in and accept applicants through Clearing if there are places remaining for a programme of study. Concessions will not be sought for applicants at this

stage nor will applicants be able to apply for AP(E)L.

2.40 Applicants presenting at the Clearing stage will only be considered for Scholarships or ACM Bursaries if one should become available during the Clearing process. The same criteria used for those applying earlier in the application process will then be applied.

Deferred Entry

2.41 ACM will accept applications for deferred entry for all courses.

2.42 Deferred entry offers will be held for a maximum of one year. Scholarships and ACM Bursaries will only be allocated in respect of the current entry cycle.

Registration

2.43 All students are required to complete a registration form at the start of their course, and when progressing from one FHEQ Level to the next.

2.44 Registration information about students on FHEQ-level 4 programmes, and above, is passed to the partner university within six weeks after the start of the trimester.

2.45 Registration information about students on UAL-validated courses, is passed to the funding and validating bodies.

Provision of Information

2.46 Entry requirements, application, audition and interview procedures will be communicated to applicants through the ACM Prospectus and by electronic communication on receipt of the application. (UCAS inform applicants of their own processes; however additional ACM processes will be communicated to applicants as appropriate).

2.47 Information on fees, additional expenses and funding opportunities is provided through our Registry, issued on request before an application is received and systematically at audition or when an application is received. Applicants are directed to appropriate information in respect of Government and other funding sources, including ACM Bursaries.

2.48 Successful applicants will be notified in writing of any significant changes that may be made to a programme of study after an offer of a place has been made.

2.49 Information relating to the ACM Admissions Appeals procedures will be made available to applicants on request.

Allocation of Scholarships and ACM Bursaries

2.50 Scholarships to be allocated by ACM will be done so in accordance with the current published criteria for awarding that is current.

2.51 As a part of the admissions process, an admissions placing list is established based on the applicant's entry qualifications (or projected outcome of results) and their performance at audition and interview. This list is then used as the guide for allocating Scholarships and ACM Bursaries. The highest placed eligible applicants will receive available Scholarships.

2.52 Applicants for ACM Bursaries must apply by published deadlines to be considered for awards for the forthcoming academic year. ACM Bursaries will be allocated taking into account the applicant's financial circumstances, and will be made only in respect of tuition fees. Applicants must agree to the terms and conditions of any Bursary offered.

2.53 The number and value of ACM Bursaries varies at the start of each Academic Year.

Recruitment

2.54 All promotional literature on ACM programmes of study will reflect the diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the potential students for those courses and programmes, and outreach initiatives will reflect the ACM's Equality and Diversity Policy.

2.55 The ACM Prospectus will give sufficient information to enable applicants to make informed decisions about their career options.

2.56 Target recruitment numbers for each course are agreed annually between the Head of Education, Programme Managers and the Executive and take into account:

- market demand;
- target numbers from outside agencies i.e. Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Education Funding Agency (EFA);
- ACM resources available;
- a requirement to recoup course delivery costs.

Data Protection

2.57 Successful applicants' records will be kept and maintained for the duration of their course of study and for one further year after graduation or withdrawal. After this date only a transcription of achievements ratified by a Final Exam Board or UALab Student Report Form process will be maintained electronically and/or manually.

The records of applicants who are unsuccessful will be kept for one month to allow applicant appeals against the decision, if they wish to exercise this policy. If no appeal is lodged within this timeframe the records will be destroyed.

2.58 The application form includes a declaration for applicants to sign which provides information on the ACM's compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, Data Protection Employment Practices Code, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the United Kingdom Data Protection (Processing of Sensitive Personal Data) Order 2006 and the Protection of Freedom Act 2012.

Moderation of Applications

2.59 The moderation of rejected applicants is submitted via a report to the relevant Programme Manager. The Programme Manager review's available recorded evidence and / or the student's audition submission. The Programme Manager has a final decision regarding whether to either uphold or overturn the decision.

2.60 A sample of successful applicants is submitted in a report to the relevant Programme

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Manager at the end of each audition event. Programme Managers use this to identify where training is required.

2.61 Monitoring and review of the audition and selection process help to promote greater consistency between practice, subjects, departments and faculties as well as between programmes.

3.   Responsible Parties

3.1 The policy lead is responsible for the cyclical monitoring and review of the policy in liaison with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager. The Admissions Policy lead is:

- Admissions Manager

3.2 Decisions and appropriate actions in support of the implementation of the Policy will be authorised by the following designated staff:

- Admissions Manager
- Admissions Officers
- Academic Registrar
- Programme Managers
- Head of Education
- Senior Management

4.   Reference Points

4.1.   Internal:

- Admissions Guidance
- Student Grievance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy

4.2.   External:

- Middlesex University Regulations, B: General Regulations for Admissions
- UALab Admissions Policy
- QAA Quality Code Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education
- Data Protection Act 1998
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The United Kingdom Data Protection (Processing of Sensitive Personal Data) Order 2006
- Protection of Freedom Act 2012

5.   Date of Approval and Next Review

Version: 1.1

Approved on: 28 Jul 2017

Approved by: Academic Board

Next Review: 01 Aug 2018