



# Senate Handbook

## Staff Handbook

### Admissions

This Handbook supplements Regulations governed by Senate.

It includes policies, advice and/or guidance that all staff involved the consideration of student applications are expected to follow in the proper conduct of University business.

# Contents

|     |   |    |
|-----|---|----|
| 1   | About this Handbook   | 3  |
| 2   | General principles in making offers to prospective registered students                    | 4  |
|     | 2.1 Who is authorised to make offers to students?   | 4  |
|     | 2.2 Minimum University entry requirements for registered students                         | 4  |
|     | 2.3 Entry requirements: academic qualifications or alternative experience                 | 5  |
|     | 2.4 Entry requirements: English language proficiency                                      | 6  |
| 3   | Pre-sessional courses   | 10 |
|     | 3.1 Pre-Masters course in Engineering   | 10 |
|     | 3.2 Pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes   | 10 |
|     | 3.3 Kaplan International College London   | 10 |
| 4   | Short course delegates and associate students   | 12 |
| 5   | Visiting students   | 15 |
| 6   | External and internal accreditation of prior learning credits                             | 16 |
|     | 6.1 Prior learning credits  | 16 |
|     | 6.2 Types of prior learning credits   | 16 |
|     | 6.3 External Credit Accumulation (ECA)  | 17 |
|     | 6.4 Short Course Accreditation (SCA)  | 19 |
|     | 6.5 Transfer to Higher Award (THA)  | 21 |
|     | 6.6 Cranfield Credit Accumulation (CCA)   | 23 |
|     | 6.7 Admission of research students with prior research work                               | 25 |
|     | 6.8 Recognition of Experiential Prior Learning (RPL)                                      | 23 |
| 7   | Special considerations for students from outside the European Union                       | 26 |
|     | 7.1 ATAS  | 26 |
|     | 7.2 Student visas and CASs  | 26 |
| 8   | Security Process – Shrivenham   | 27 |
|     | 8.1 At time of application  | 27 |
|     | 8.2 Post-application - Complementary Business Students and Self-Funding Overseas Students | 27 |
|     | 8.3 Pass issue process for Cranfield Students   | 27 |
| 9   | Undergraduate Admissions Policy   | 29 |
| 9.1 | Academic Entry Criteria   | 29 |
| 9.2 | Entry Routes  | 29 |
| 9.3 | English Language Proficiency  | 30 |
| 9.4 | Accredited Prior Learning   | 32 |
| 9.5 | Offers  | 33 |
| 9.6 | Visiting Students   | 33 |
| 9.7 | Short Course Students   | 34 |
| 9.8 | Admissions Feedback and Complaints  | 34 |
| 10  | Admissions feedback, complaints and appeals   | 35 |

## Major changes to this document since version 2.6 (September 2022):

- Clarification that for short course students registration for credit has to take place within the first week of the module and cannot be retrospective. (4)
- Clarification that accreditation of prior learning towards an award-bearing course will result in an appropriate reduction in registration period (6.1)
- Addition of new APL category, Cranfield Credit Accumulation (6.2, 6.6)
- Clarification that an associate student who then transfers to an award-bearing course may not retake as an elective any module that they have failed (6.4)
- Amendment that apprentices awarded EPL are allowed to retain exemption if they transfer to non-Apprentice Levy funding (6.7)
- Revised security process for Shrivenham admissions (8)
- Revised Undergraduate Entry Route process (Route 3) (9.2)

# 1 About this Handbook

This Handbook outlines the University's policies and guidance relating to the processing of applications to become a registered postgraduate student on courses leading to either learning credits or formal academic awards, associate students studying for learning credits or applications to join a non-award-bearing apprenticeship course (sections 2-8). It also provides staff advice on the operational aspects and expectations of Senate. The information herein has taken full account of the QAA's UK Quality Code of Higher Education.

In addition, the Handbook outlines the admissions policy and process for undergraduate students in Section 9.

This Handbook is supplemented by guidance issued by the Academic Registrar (e.g. standard terms and conditions which apply to all offers; guidance to applicants who wish to use prior learning to exempt them from modules on a taught course (Section 5)).

A number of operational policies and procedures vary considerably between Schools. Please note that this Handbook does **not** provide information or advice on the following matters:

- internal School procedures for issuing and considering individual applications, including levels of authority and second sign off, and individual staff workloads;
- student number targets and indicators (both financial and numerical);
- consideration of students of different fee status (including "equivalent or lower qualification" (ELQ), European Partner Programme (EPP) and ERASMUS, and their implications for OfS funding targets);
- use of recruitment agents and contracts with third party sponsors;
- tuition fee levels;
- tuition fee bursaries and maintenance bursaries for individual students;
- management of additional contractual obligations for individual students, if their studies are linked to research (or other contractual) deliverables;
- procedures for the ethical approval of student research proposals.

Readers should seek information and advice for the above matters from appropriate staff within their School.

## 2 General principles in making offers to prospective registered students

This section outlines the general principles for managing applications and offers which apply to all students. These principles are intended to guide those staff assessing applications to ensure consistency of standards across the University, and to ensure that the University complies with the requirements of external agencies (including but not limited to the Home Office, the Office for Students and the Quality Assurance Agency).

### 2.1 Who is authorised to make offers to students?

Offers of admission are made by staff on the delegated authority of the Academic Registrar, as outlined in Regulation 42. Where a student does not meet the standard entry requirements, additional approval by the Academic Registrar (or specially-appointed person(s) acting on their behalf) is also required. Such offers are referred to as “exceptional admissions”.

Different processes exist within individual Schools to manage the approval of an offer on behalf of the Head of School. For research students, authorisation is normally required by the agreement of at least two academic staff, and requires a personal interview (face-to-face or through other means) with the applicant. For taught course students, some Schools appoint specific admissions tutors, others delegate the authority to individual Course Directors. Schools may also delegate authority to Admissions to approve offers.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding who has the delegated authority, in requesting to Admissions that an offer is to be made, the School is acknowledging that:

- to the best of its knowledge, the student is physically and intellectually able to undertake the course of study or programme of supervised research;
- it has committed to offering the course of study or programme of supervised research for the specified period (notwithstanding unexpected cancellations or deferrals of such provision);
- it has committed to ensuring that the relevant facilities and levels of learning support will be provided; and
- appropriate and/or reasonable adjustments have been (or will be) made to take account of specific learning, pastoral or physical needs for individual students, providing these have been disclosed by the applicant.

Care should be taken by staff involved in the consideration of any application to ensure that, in making an offer or rejecting an application, the University is not unfairly discriminating against any applicant on the basis of the protected categories covered by the Equality Act 2010 and its associated legislation (race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, family situation, gender reassignment or age).

All offers made to students are subject to terms and conditions which are published on the University website <https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/study/taught-degrees/how-to-apply>.

### 2.2 Minimum University entry requirements for registered students

For visiting students and associate students, there are no formal entry requirements, although staff should still ensure it is appropriate and/or safe for the student to be registered. These students may be studying to obtain learning credits, but are not registered formally for a degree or other qualification. Staff in the Schools have discretion to recommend offers to students without making

---

<sup>1</sup> In such cases, for the purposes of this Handbook, the terms ‘Admissions’ and ‘School’ have been retained in order to clearly demark respective roles notwithstanding that in certain cases, Admissions may undertake both the ‘Admissions’ and ‘School’ roles.

reference to specific minimum qualifications (notwithstanding any need for compliance with national immigration requirements or local campus security requirements – [see section 8](#)).

All other students (i.e. those applying to study for a named award) are subject to minimum standard entry requirements, relating to both their academic qualifications or alternative experience, and their English language proficiency, as outlined below.

## 2.3 Entry requirements: academic qualifications or alternative experience

For all students aiming for a named award of the University, the applicants must possess

*either*

(a) a relevant recognised UK first degree with honours in class 1 or 2, or other academic or professional qualification which the University judges to be equivalent;<sup>2</sup>

*or*

(b) relevant practical experience with a lower qualification.

### 2.3.1 Classification of student entry credentials

Students who meet requirement (a) are designated as “HQ”; students who meet requirement (b) are designated as “EQ”. Other students who do not meet these criteria are designated “LQ”. Very occasionally, a student may be designated as “QQ”, where their qualifications cannot be interpreted easily.

In assessing an application to decide whether it is “HQ”, staff in the Admissions Office use advice provided by NARIC for comparators for academic qualifications awarded outside the UK and the QAA’s *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*. In addition, Admissions keep registers of formal or informal academic or professional qualifications which they deem to be equivalent to the required entry qualifications.

Where a student is not designated as “HQ”, staff in the Admissions Office use the following guide to consider whether an applicant can be designated as “EQ”. (The Admissions Office will, however, only make such a recommendation in clear cases, otherwise leaving deliberation of the relevance of post-qualification work experience to School staff to assess individual “LQ” cases.)

| Qualification achieved                  | Practical experience requirement                        |
|---|---|
| UK first degree with honours in class 3 | at least 3 years relevant post-qualification experience |
| UK first degree without honours (pass)  | at least 5 years relevant post-qualification experience |
| UK - lower relevant qualifications      | at least 7 years relevant post-qualification experience |

| Qualification equivalence <sup>2</sup>                                      | Practical experience requirement                        |
|---|---|
| FHEQ level 6 in full, or above <sup>3</sup>                                 | no requirement  |
| FHEQ level 6 in part (e.g. expressly equivalent to UK Bachelors (Ordinary)) | at least 5 years relevant post-qualification experience |
| FHEQ level 4 or 5   | at least 7 years relevant post-qualification experience |

Students who *will be likely to* meet HQ standard as outlined above may be marked as either “MV” or “MQ” (the two signifiers mean the same thing). This means that the student is currently undertaking, or has recently completed a qualification, but their results have not yet been confirmed.

<sup>2</sup> Using NARIC as the primary source of information

<sup>3</sup> This would include NARIC assessments of “UK Bachelors (Honours)” and “UK Bachelors standard” irrespective of marks and grades. Academic staff should nevertheless review marks obtained in relevant subject areas.

## 2.3.2 Unqualified students

The above requirements are intended as a minimum standard for entry. It is recognised, however, than many applicants may be suitably qualified due to the length, quality and relevance of their previous experience.

For all students who are not designated HQ or EQ, additional approval is required by the designated authority in Admissions. They exercise their academic judgement (based on alternative evidence, including cases presented by other internal staff) on whether the student is appropriately equipped for postgraduate study in their chosen course.

Where Admissions agrees to make an offer based on the consideration of relevant practical experience and the opinion(s) of relevant academic staff, this decision shall be taken on the respective merits of each individual case: in all cases the overriding consideration must be the applicant's suitability to undertake the course or programme in question.

Students designated as "QQ" are treated as if they were "LQ" until further evidence of their academic qualifications is provided.

## 2.4 Entry requirements: English language proficiency

### 2.4.1 Requirements for all non-UK applicants: formal objective English language tests

All students studying towards a formal award of the University are required to demonstrate an acceptable level of English Language proficiency prior to registration, with the exception of:

- applicants who have obtained a higher education level award from a UK institution and have been taught and assessed in English (noting that Schools may still require a formal objective English language test for applicants who only complete part of their study at a UK institution);
- applicants who have studied at secondary and/or higher education levels in another country or countries where the principal language is English, and which are on a list of acceptable majority English speaking countries maintained by the Admissions Office (this list is not negotiable by other staff in the University - it is compiled centrally, keeping abreast of national immigration requirements).

For all practical purposes, Admissions provides Schools with assessments of all students, simply indicating whether "English required" is "Yes" or "No".

Where evidence of English language proficiency is required ("English required" = Yes), specific types of documentary evidence of English language proficiency are needed. The evidence is based partly on UK Home Office requirements for issuing visas to students from outside the UK.

The following external and objective test results are deemed to be acceptable levels of proficiency:

| Test provider | Tests accepted   | Minimum score requirements   |
|---------------|--|--|
| IELTS*        | IELTS Academic<br>IELTS Online<br>IELTS for UKVI<br>Academic | 6.5 overall and 5.5 in all skill components.   |
| TOEFL         | TOEFL iBT<br>We accept all 3 test options:<br>TOEFL iBT test | 92 total and minimum skill component scores of 18 reading, 17 listening, 20 speaking and 17 writing. |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | TOEFL iBT Home Edition<br>TOEFL iBT Paper Edition  |   |
| <b>Pearson PTE</b>   | <b>PTE Academic</b><br><b>PTE Academic Online</b><br><b>PTE Academic UKVI</b>  | 65 overall and 59 in all skill components.                                    |
| <b>Cambridge Assessment English</b>  | Any Cambridge Assessment English test meeting the required scores can be accepted. The following are recommended as being within the scale score range:<br><b>Cambridge C1 Advanced</b><br><b>Cambridge C2 Proficiency</b><br><b>Linguaskill General</b> | Cambridge English Scale score of 180 overall and 160 in all skill components. |
| <b>Trinity College London</b>  | <b>Integrated Skills in English - ISE III (C1)</b>   | Overall Pass outcome.   |
| <b>LanguageCert</b>  | <b>International ESOL B2 Communicator</b><br>Both the Written and Spoken tests must be taken.<br><b>International ESOL SELT B2</b><br>This test includes all 4 skill components.   | High Pass overall and 33 in all skill components.                             |
| <b>Kaplan</b>  | <b>KITE (Kaplan International Tools for English)</b>   | 475 overall and 410 in all skill components.                                  |
| Please note that these scores represent the University minimum: individual Schools and/or Course Directors may set higher standards, providing these are communicated in advance to applicants, e.g. in the prospectus.  |  |   |
| In addition to these minimum overall test scores, applicants are expected to achieve a balanced score across the reading, writing, listening and speaking elements of the test. The Admissions Office may refer an application back to the School if any one element of the test is particularly poor. |  |   |
| Test scores will only be accepted if issued less than two years before the proposed start date of registration.  |  |   |

The above table outlines the most common tests received by Admissions as evidence. Admissions will also accept:

- alternative formal assessments not included in the list above, providing some comparator to the scores above can be identified; or
- information provided by NARIC or UKCISA relating to the English language proficiency normally expected of students who have obtained formal academic qualifications from institutions outside of the UK; or

- applicants who have been continuously employed within the UK for a minimum of five years, providing that a reference from their current employer makes explicit reference to their high quality spoken and written communication skills.

#### **2.4.2 Exemptions which may apply to any applicant**

Where an applicant has undertaken an objective English language test and achieved a borderline English language test score, the Admissions Office may exceptionally authorise an offer of admission, providing that a further informal assessment by staff of the University specially appointed for that purpose has taken place, and that assessment confirms that they have an appropriate English language proficiency to commence the course.

A list of qualified staff is available from the Admissions Office and, in such cases, a formal report should be received by the course team for review. The report and supporting case from the course team should be approved by the Head of the Admissions Office before an offer can be authorised: they are likely to consult with the relevant Course Director or Supervisor in the School before making a decision.

Where a student does not meet the English language proficiency requirement, and the School wishes to support an offer, a request should be made to the Admissions Office to authorise the additional informal assessments and to ensure that the student meets the immigration requirements for their visa application.

In accepting the alternative documentary evidence and making an offer, the School is acknowledging that the ability of the student to learn in English is acceptable and is committing to ensuring that any individual learning support identified after registration will be provided.

On rare occasions, the Admissions Office can waive the requirement for explicit evidence of English language proficiency on the basis of compelling alternative evidence or circumstances that demonstrate the applicant's ability to study and communicate in English. The Head of the Admissions Office will consult with at least one member of the senior management team of the University in coming to a decision. The Admissions Office's decision to accept or reject the alternative evidence or circumstances is not subject to any right of appeal.

#### **2.4.3 Exemptions which may apply to specific student cohorts**

Education Committee (on behalf of Senate) has the authority to approve "special cases" which may apply to specific course cohorts. Special case exemptions will need to be reviewed every three years, which will require an assessment of the academic progress of previous cohorts.

Such cases will only be approved under exceptional circumstances, and Schools will need to provide a detailed pedagogic case and business rationale to permit the requirements on individual applicants to be over-ridden, which shall include:

- background to the situation and why a special case is necessary;
- projected numbers of applicants;
- how the School intends to ensure appropriate pre-sessional and in-sessional support for applicants and students;
- whether the School is seeking to provide pre-applicant support (in order to prepare students for formal or informal tests);
- confirmation from the relevant Director of Education that a process for auditing the agreed arrangements is in place (both for individual applicants and for the overall arrangements).

Any case will need to identify whether University or external resources will be needed, and how these costs will be supported. Approval of special cases requiring support from staff of the University will be subject to those resources being available.

Some examples of special cases which may be approved by Education Committee include:

Example 1: the European Partnership Programme (EPP)

*Higher education institutions across Europe may be formally recognised as being part of EPP. The International team in Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) liaises closely with EPP partners in the recruitment of students, and many of these relationships are very long-standing.*

*There is a blanket approval that applicants from any EPP partner may be admitted without a formal objective language test, providing there has been a local assessment of English language corresponding to at least B2 standard in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This local assessment may be conducted by staff of Cranfield University specially appointed for that purpose, who retain records of individual applicants and the evidence used to support their entry, and who report annually on student numbers recruited through this mechanism.*

Example 2: a post-experience Masters course offered for a specific corporate client

*Increasingly, the University is considering models of delivering courses overseas to its strategic partners. Where those partners sponsor students and the course is delivered in a country where English is not the primary language, Education Committee will consider cases where it is clear the day-to-day business language of the company is English and where the potential students are likely to be admitted on work experience rather than academic qualifications.*

*In such cases, Education Committee would require evidence on the length and strength of the relationship with the partner, and evidence of the language spoken in the daily working environment. In such cases, one alternative is that a formal objective test could be substituted with informal assessments of applicant-submitted written work and a video-conference interview, by staff with relevant expertise and approved by Education Committee for that purpose. The Head of the Admissions Office would need to receive a specifically-designed form (designed by them in consultation with the course team) capturing this information alongside the standard application form in order to process a formal offer.*

*Any case would be subject to the volume of applicants likely to be assessed and the availability of Cranfield staff to undertake the assessment. Schools may be expected to contribute to the costs of these assessments, or pass those costs onto the corporate client.*

## 3 Pre-sessional courses

A limited number of preparatory or bridging courses are available, either directly through the University or through a partner institution, to students who do not fully meet the University's entry criteria. These courses may either relate to technical knowledge (or lack of academic qualifications in a specific discipline) or to English language proficiency, or both. Some are offered by the University, and some through agreed partnerships with other educational institutions.

### 3.1 Pre-Masters course in Engineering

The University provides a full-time course (of just under a year) on the Cranfield campus to prepare students for a number of named courses. It is designed for students who already possess a first degree but who do not meet the University's standard entry criteria, or for students who have been out of formal education for some time and need to enhance their skills and knowledge before undertaking postgraduate study.

Prospective students apply directly for the Pre-Masters course and their chosen follow-on Masters course simultaneously. Approval for an offer of admission is needed for both courses before a combined formal offer is made by Admissions.

Successful completion (through formal assessment) of the Pre-Masters course guarantees progression directly to their chosen postgraduate course. There is, however, no formal qualification associated with the course, although the University will provide evidence of attendance and completion of the course.

### 3.2 Pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes

The University provides a number of courses at the Cranfield campus, designed for international (both EU and rest of world) students to improve and develop their use of academic English prior to their main course of study. The courses run through the year; students select a start date corresponding to their perceived level of English language proficiency, with all courses finishing in time for the registration of courses on the Cranfield campus in October. Preference on the course is given to students who fall just below the University's English language entry criteria: where spaces are available, the course is also open to students who have already satisfied this requirement but are seeking an insight into academic study in the UK before their postgraduate course starts.

Prospective students must already hold an offer of admission on an award bearing course before being considered for a place on Pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes. No student will be admitted to the Pre-sessional course unless they meet the following English language proficiency standards:

- a) A minimum of IELTS 5.0 (or equivalent) overall;
- b) A minimum of IELTS 5.0 (or equivalent) in the writing element;
- c) A minimum of IELTS 4.5 (or equivalent) in all other elements.

Students who have not yet demonstrated English language proficiency are advised of the availability of the Pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes courses by Admissions as part of their formal offer. Academic staff are also able to informally advise students of the benefits of the course if they feel it would be helpful before they begin postgraduate study.

### 3.3 Kaplan International College London

Kaplan International College London (KICL) is contracted by Cranfield University to provide courses to prepare international students for postgraduate study.

Students are either recruited by Kaplan directly, or may be referred by Course Directors when considering an application directly to the University. All students accepted by Kaplan must meet entry criteria agreed with the University - a list is held in Admissions. The Kaplan course comprises of a mix of modules for academic skills, subject specific modules and English for academic study, and students who successfully complete the Kaplan course receive a Pre-Masters award from Kaplan.

As part of the arrangement with Cranfield, students will be offered a 2 year course – the first part of the offer consists of the course at Kaplan and the second year will be the postgraduate Masters course at Cranfield. A schedule of courses offered through KICL for study at Cranfield is retained and managed by Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA). Students who successfully complete the Graduate Diploma to the required grades are guaranteed progression to their chosen course at Cranfield.

Academic staff can refer students to courses at Kaplan (where they do not fully meet the University's entry criteria) by using the online application review and decision. Admissions will confirm to the student that they have not been successful with their chosen postgraduate course and will provide details of Kaplan courses. In referring a student, academic staff should also consider whether any suitable preparatory courses are available at the University (such as the Cranfield Pre-Masters course). Academic staff can also refer more informal enquiries about Kaplan courses to the Admissions Office or to the University website.

## 4 Short course delegates and associate students

The University offers short courses, as well as courses leading to formal degrees and other awards. People attending such courses (which are often single modules of a longer course) are either:

- short course delegates i.e. people who attend the course for personal development
- associate students i.e. people who study the course, and are assessed against intended learning outcomes, and who attain Cranfield learning credits as a result.

The University may offer a place on a short course to applicants who do not fully meet the University's entry criteria. Short course delegates may be registered as associate students for the accumulation of credit, providing that they successfully complete the assessment associated with the course. **Registration for credit has to take place within the first week of the module. It cannot be retrospective.** A delegate should register for credit through admission to the University as an associate student.

Fees charged for modules undertaken by associate students should be set at an equivalent rate as the fee charged for the award-bearing course.

Associate students may only attempt each module for credit once (taking into account any permissible resits of associated assessments).

All associate students studying a module for credit should be provided with an initial 12-month registration period.

Different processes for the admission of associate students apply to those studying with the three schools based at Cranfield Campus (SATM, SOM and SWEE) and those studying with CDS. All students registering as an associate student with the intention of progressing to an award-bearing course should be registered on the short course code for the appropriate award-bearing course.

### **SOM, SWEE and SATM<sup>4</sup>**

Associate students do not apply through the standard admission process but are "sponsored" by a School: The Admissions team provides specific forms that articulate the requirements for an associate student to be registered (e.g. start and end dates, access to resources, planned activities).

The approval of the admission of an associate student shall be made by the relevant Course Director or Module Leader. The decision to allow applications from associate students to join modules or courses is the responsibility of individual Course Directors. The Course Director or Module Leader will identify prior to registration the required access to resources and the start and end dates of the student's registration. Associate students are required to register through the relevant Registry.

An associate student will have appropriate access to University resources and will be subject to the relevant University Laws. Associate students do not have to meet standard academic entry requirements.

Accumulation of credit is limited to a maximum of 60 credits. Where a person has already accumulated 60 credits, and where this corresponds to a specific award-bearing course, they should be encouraged at that point to register for the corresponding formal award. The "five-year currency" rule for all prior accumulation of credit will apply.

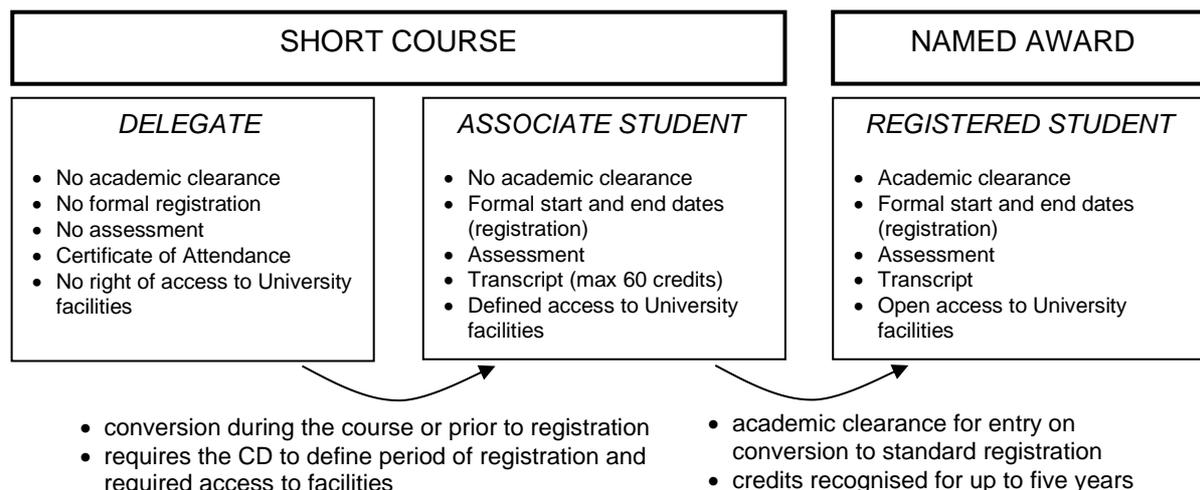
---

<sup>4</sup> Some areas of SATM follow the process set out for CDS as below

## Transferral of associate students onto award-bearing degrees

Persons accumulating credit may, subject to approval, use these towards a formal award of the University (see section 6). They shall, at the point of registration for the formal award, be subject to the University's standard entry requirements, or the requirements of the individual course. Associate students considering transferral to an award-bearing course should be made aware that they must meet the University's minimum English language proficiency requirements before they are able to register on the award-bearing course.

Any part-time associate student transferring onto an award-bearing course will have their registration period reduced by 2 months per 10 credits imported. Associate students studying on a full-time basis who transfer onto an award-bearing course will join the current cohort of students for the completion of the award.



## CDS<sup>5</sup>

The decision to allow applications from associate students to join modules or courses is the responsibility of individual Course Directors. All students applying for a Short Course for Credit (SCC) at CDS are assessed against the University's full admission criteria at the point of entry, for both academic qualifications/experience and English language proficiency.

Once a student has applied to CDS as an associate student Admissions will check if the applicant meets the University entry criteria in full.

Applicants who have met the entry criteria and are designated as HQ or EQ students will be offered a place as an associate student and informed that at any time they may transfer up to 60 learning credits-worth of modules to an award bearing course, following the standard transfer process.

Applicants who have not met the entry criteria, and are designated as LQ (or QQ) students will be offered a place as an associate student and informed that at any time they may transfer up to 60 learning credits-worth of modules to an award bearing course, however, as the full entry criteria had not been met this would be treated as an exceptional admission request.

Where a course has a specific order of attendance for modules this should be considered by the student/course team at the point of admission to a SCC.

<sup>5</sup> Some areas of SATM also follow this CDS process

The above admissions process should be used for all students enrolling on short courses that award credits, including those not automatically linked to an MSc.

Any part-time associate student transferring onto an award-bearing course will have their registration period reduced by 2 months per 10 credits imported (or by 3 months for some AP contract courses with 5 or 4-year registration periods). Associate students studying on a full-time basis who transfer onto an award-bearing course will join the current cohort of students for the completion of the award.

## 5 Visiting students

The University offers opportunities for students registered at other universities to spend time at Cranfield, either undertaking modules and/or research, which they can then use for learning credits or their own research at their home institution.

**Only people who are registered as students at another university can be sponsored by Cranfield as a “visiting student”.**

Examples of visiting students include:

- a student registered for a PhD at another institution, with which Cranfield may or may not be collaborating. The PhD student is not registered to receive a Cranfield award, but requires access to our specialist facilities in order to undertake specific research or research training linked to their other studies.
- students from another university attending one or more modules on a formal exchange or student mobility programme (e.g. ERASMUS), where they are not also registered for a Cranfield award.
- students who are taking single modules of our MSc courses, as part of a consortium agreement with one or more other universities, and where one of those partners is taking the lead of managing the students’ overall programmes.
- undergraduate students at other universities, who are attending Cranfield as part of a placement or intercalated year.

The following people cannot be registered as visiting students:

- people undertaking research on a temporary or short-term contract (paid or unpaid);
- visiting professors;
- secondary school students, or undergraduates, on work experience;
- registered students who have completed their studies and are undertaking additional research outside of their course for the School or department.

Visiting students do not apply through the usual route and are instead “sponsored” by a School; Admissions provides specific forms to articulate the requirements for a visiting student (e.g. start and end dates, access to resources, planned activities).



- c) Cranfield award – i.e. where a student has graduated from Cranfield with either a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma and now wants to “cash in” those credits for a higher award associated with the same programme of study.

### **Transfer to Higher Award**

**see Section 6.5**

- d) Cranfield Credit Accumulation i.e. recognition that the student has successfully undertaken and passed the module previously at Cranfield as part of another completed award. Students are exempted from completing these modules, with no mark recorded and without the module being included in the taught average or being shown on the student’s transcript.

### **Cranfield Credit Accumulation**

**see Section 6.6**

**In all cases, the use of prior learning credits should be agreed with the student before the commencement of their registration, in order that it is clear from the outset whether any studies will be recognised.**

Such recognition (i.e. the acceptance of prior learning credits) can be made either at the point of offer, or after an offer has been accepted, but before the student registers. Applications for prior credit recognition after registration require a clear and detailed explanation about why the application was not made before registration. The University (through the Academic Registrar) reserves the right to refuse consideration of prior learning credits if the application is not made prior to registration on the course.

## **6.3 External Credit Accumulation (ECA)**

This section applies to the recognition of learning credits, for study not undertaken at Cranfield University.

### **6.3.1 Principles of ECA**

ECA may be authorised by the Head of Registry Services, provided that:

- a) any request for ECA corresponds directly to an existing module on the applicant’s programme of study. ECA is only granted for full modules; partial module exemption will not be considered.
- b) the learning credits to be used have been obtained by the applicant within the previous five years.<sup>7</sup>
- c) the application is supported by the relevant Course Director.
- d) the previous achievement of the student was not already the result of prior credit accumulation (i.e. the achievement to be recognised is the result of direct learning and assessment and not through a previous recognition scheme).
- e) the use of ECA is not precluded by a body which externally recognises the award (i.e. a professional body accreditation).

Senate has also restricted the number of external credits that can be used towards an award. These maximum limits are:

|                          | Credits |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Postgraduate Certificate | 15      |

<sup>7</sup> “Obtained” is defined here as the official date on which the final assessment associated with the credits was completed. The five-year period is measured to the point of application.

|                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| Postgraduate Diploma | 30 |
| Master's             | 50 |

These limits apply retroactively: for example, if a student has applied for 50 credits to be recognised towards a Master's qualification, but subsequently transfers to a Postgraduate Diploma, only a maximum of 30 credits can be used. Applicants who have completed a Level 7 apprenticeship with another provider may request the import of additional external credits (up to 120 credits towards a Master's course) in order to complete a Master's-level award with Cranfield, providing the credits obtained at another institution are comparable to the corresponding Cranfield award.<sup>8</sup>

### 6.3.2 Process of applying for ECA

1. The applicant applies in writing to the relevant Course Director<sup>9</sup> with a request for ECA, either at the point of initial application or after they have received an offer.
2. The Course Director considers whether an application is appropriate, through dialogue with the applicant. The Course Director will need to establish the nature of the prior learning credits and their applicability to individual modules of the course in question. It is advised that the Course Director obtains:
  - a) The module descriptors for the Cranfield modules to be exempted.
  - b) Detailed descriptions (i.e. the equivalent of module descriptors) of the prior learning.
  - c) Formal certification or confirmation of the award of the prior learning credits, including the dates of such award(s) (e.g. copies of certificates of the award/s or a confirmation letter from the awarding institution).

*NB: The University reserves the right to apply a fee for the consideration of ECA. Any fee would be payable irrespective of the outcome of consideration of the ECA request. At present, it chooses not to apply one.*

3. The Course Director may need to request additional evidence from the applicant if the formal documentation outlined above is insufficient to make an assessment of the suitability of the prior learning. They may also seek the advice of other members of the course team (e.g. module leaders).
4. Once all the information has been collected, the Course Director outlines a case to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the prior learning are a good correspondence to the intended learning outcomes of the module(s) for which exemption is sought.
5. The Course Director provides the following to the Head of Registry Services on a form provided:
  - a) A list of the modules for which ECA is to be awarded (noting the maximum levels of exemption outlined above);
  - b) Copies of the formal certification of prior learning;
  - c) The academic case for ECA (as outlined in paragraph 4 above).
6. The Head of Registry Services, considers the case for ECA and subsequently informs the Course Director, the Chair of the relevant examination board and the Academic Registrar of any approved ECA.

<sup>8</sup> For example, applicants who have completed the Senior leader Apprenticeship Standard with another provider may request that all 120 credits achieved are imported towards completion of a Cranfield MBA award.

<sup>9</sup> It is recognised that the term "Course Director" is not universal across all Schools, but is used here to mean the person responsible for ensuring the academic coherence of the course.

7. The Course Director is then responsible for informing the applicant of the decision of the Head of Registry Services: this may involve providing the applicant with alternative preparatory work to take account of the decision.
8. The Academic Registrar ensures the official student record is updated to reflect the decision.

### 6.3.3 Recognition of ECA on formal University records

Where ECA has been granted, the Chair of the relevant examination board is informed: they should note any implications for the award of any formal qualification. ECA-accredited modules count as a “pass”, but no marks are recorded against them. Modules granted on the basis of ECA are therefore excluded from any calculations to determine an average mark for the taught element, or totality of the course.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the ECA is recorded for future achievement records and other formal documents. Higher education achievement records (HEARs) produced by Cranfield University will identify where credit for a module has been granted on the basis of ECA. No mark for ECA is recorded on the HEAR, but the prior achievement is recognised.

## 6.4 Short Course Accreditation (SCA)

This section applies to the recognition of learning credits, for study undertaken at Cranfield University. This usually applies for students who have been registered as “associate students” for one or more accredited short courses, but is also applicable to students who have not completed a prior award but wish to re-apply to the University.

### 6.4.1 Principles of SCA

SCA may be authorised by the Academic Registrar, provided that:

- a) any request for SCA corresponds directly to a module that is part of the proposed programme of study (or, in exceptional cases, very closely corresponding). SCA is only granted for full modules; partial module exemption will not be considered.
- b) the learning credits to be used have been obtained by the applicant within the previous five years.<sup>10</sup>
- c) no more than 60 Cranfield learning credits are requested for SCA in the application.<sup>11</sup>
- d) the application is supported by the relevant Course Director.
- e) any credits requested for SCA have been formally awarded by a Board of Examiners.

Associate students may only attempt each module for credit once (taking into account any permissible resits of associated assessments). In addition, an associate student who then transfers to an award-bearing course may not retake as an elective any module that they have failed as an associate student.

Careful consideration should be given to approving re-admission of students who have previously undertaken but not completed a previous course at the University. Where a student was unable to complete their course of study, Course Directors should be confident that any issues that prevented a student completing their course previously are resolved. Where a student has previously failed their course of study, Course Directors should only approve re-admission and use of SCA with good

---

<sup>10</sup> “Obtained” is defined here as the official date on which the final assessment associated with the credits was completed.

<sup>11</sup> The University will usually recognise the most recent credits that have been accumulated. Associate students should be encouraged to register for an award if they have accrued 60 credits.

reason, and only once any credits to be used as SCA have been formally awarded by a Board of Examiners.

Any decision for SCA must be agreed by both the Course Director and the applicant:

- a) The accumulation of credits by an associate student does not confer the student with any specific right to admission for a formal award: any such application shall be managed through the normal admissions procedures and criteria.

There is also no requirement for an applicant to have their previous Cranfield credits recognised if, for example, a student has failed an accredited short course, they may choose to have that previous study “ignored” when they register for an award.

#### 6.4.2 Process of applying for SCA

1. The applicant applies in writing to the relevant Course Director<sup>12</sup> with a request for SCA, either at the point of initial application or after they have received an offer.
2. The Course Director considers whether an application is appropriate, through dialogue with the applicant. It is advised that the Course Director obtains:
  - a) The module descriptors for the accredited short course(s) and the current Cranfield module(s) to be exempted.
  - b) Formal certification or confirmation of the award of the prior learning credits, including the dates of such award(s) (e.g. copies of certificates of the award/s or a confirmation letter from the awarding institution).

*NB: The University reserves the right to apply a fee for the consideration of SCA. Any fee would be payable irrespective of the outcome of consideration of the SCA request. At present, it chooses not to apply one.*

3. The Course Director examines the case in more detail, considering the following points (consulting other members of the course team as appropriate):
  - a) whether the accredited short course(s) still resembles the content, design and structure of the relevant part of any associated award closely enough to justify exemption;
  - b) whether any additional module(s) should be taken to ensure that the student will meet the intended learning outcomes of the award;
  - c) whether the student should be asked to attend any non-credit-bearing courses, or submit any formative assessments in addition to those required for the higher award.
4. The Course Director provides the following to the Head of Registry Services:
  - a) a list of the modules for which SCA is to be awarded (noting the maximum levels of exemption outlined above);
  - b) copies of the formal certification of prior learning (which may be confirmation from an Assistant Registrar that the applicant completed the assessment associated with the credits within the past five years);
  - c) the academic case for SCA (as outlined in paragraph 3 above).
5. The Head of Registry Services considers the case for SCA and subsequently informs the Course Director, the Chair of the relevant examination board and the Academic Registrar of their decision.

---

<sup>12</sup> It is recognised that the term “Course Director” is not universal across all Schools, but is used here to mean the person responsible for ensuring the academic coherence of the course.

6. The Course Director is then responsible for informing the applicant of the decision of the Head of Registry Services: this may involve explaining how the marks may apply in the context of the current assessment criteria, and providing the applicant with alternative preparatory work to take account of the decision.
7. The Academic Registrar ensures the official student record is updated to reflect the decision, including the migration of marks.

### **6.4.3 Recognition of SCA on formal University records**

Where SCA has been granted, the Chair of the relevant examination board is informed: they are also informed of the marks obtained previously, which shall count as if the student has sat the exempted module. The marks associated with modules granted on the basis of SCA are therefore included in the normal calculations to determine an average mark for the taught element, or totality of the course.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the SCA is recorded for future achievement records and other formal documents. Higher education achievement records (HEARs) produced by Cranfield University will identify the dates when credit for a module has been granted. Marks for SCA are recorded on the HEAR, and the prior achievement and marks recognised.

## **6.5 Transfer to Higher Award (THA)**

This section applies to the recognition of learning credits, for study undertaken at Cranfield University, and where a student has been awarded a qualification of the University (most usually a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma), and where they now wish to study for a higher award associated with the same programme of study. Exceptionally, and with good reason, THA may be used to facilitate re-admission of students who have failed to complete a previous course of study at the University.

### **6.5.1 Principles of THA**

THA facilitates the import of the credits that make up a lower award, and all credits must be relevant to the course being applied for. For example, for an applicant who wishes to import a PgCert, the 60 credits of the PgCert should have been obtained in modules currently running on the higher award course. Where credits have been obtained on very similar, but not the same modules as those currently running on the higher award course, an applicant, with approval of the Course Director may seek exemption from the corresponding module providing the applicant has already met the necessary module ILOs in their previous study.

A THA may be authorised by the Academic Registrar, provided that:

- a) any request for THA applies to the same – or very similar – programme of study.
- b) the learning credits to be used have been obtained by the applicant within the previous five years.<sup>13</sup>
- c) the application is supported by the relevant Course Director
- d) any credits requested for THA have been formally awarded by a Board of Examiners..
- e) any credits requested for THA form part of the current course the applicant wishes to transfer to i.e. the credits have been obtained on the same - or very similar - modules.

There is no formal limit to the number of learning credits that may be imported, subject to approval of any exceptional requests, providing that the learning credits to be used have been gained in a

---

<sup>13</sup> "Obtained" is defined here as the official date on which the final assessment associated with the credits was completed.

structured and linear manner <sup>14</sup>, and that they have formally been approved by a Board of Examiners.

Careful consideration should be given to approving re-admission of students who have previously undertaken but not completed a previous course at the University. Where a student was unable to complete their course of study, Course Directors should be confident that any issues that prevented a student completing their course previously are resolved. Where a student has previously failed their course of study Course Directors should only approve re-admission and use of THA with good reason, and only once any credits to be used as THA have been formally awarded by a Board of Examiners.

Course Directors may elect to recognise only some of a previous award's credit: this tends to apply when a course has changed substantially since the initial award was made, such that the student would be unable to demonstrate the current intended learning outcomes of the award without undertaking additional study of new modules.

Any decision for THA (and the precise credit volume being approved) must be agreed by both the Course Director and the applicant.

- a) The presentation of a Cranfield award by an applicant applying for a THA does not confer the student with any specific right to admission for a formal award; any such application shall be managed through the normal admissions procedures and criteria.
- b) There is also no requirement for an applicant to have their previous Cranfield award recognised if, for example, a student has failed one or more of the modules, they may choose to have that previous study "ignored" when they register for an award.

### **6.5.2 Specific principles relating to the standing of the previous Cranfield award**

If an applicant is granted exemption from modules on the basis of THA, all lower awards associated with the new registration will be renounced at the point at which an examination board considers their result for a new award: the student will graduate from Cranfield University with one named award (i.e. that of the higher level of qualification).

If the name of the course has changed since the applicant was conferred with the lower award, the existing name of the higher award will take precedence over that of the lower award.

If an applicant registers for a higher award but subsequently withdraws from the programme of study, or fails to achieve the higher award, the original named award shall stand.

### **6.5.3 Process of applying for THA**

1. The applicant applies in writing to the relevant Course Director<sup>15</sup> with a request for THA, either at the point of initial application or after they have received an offer.
2. The Course Director considers whether an application is appropriate, through dialogue with the applicant. They will need to establish the nature of the previous award, and the performance of the graduate. It is advised that the Course Director obtains:
  - a) The module descriptors for all of the Cranfield modules to be exempted.
  - b) Copies of the degree certificate and transcript or higher education achievement record.

*NB: The University reserves the right to apply a fee for the consideration of THA. Any fee would be payable irrespective of the outcome of consideration of the THA request. At present, it chooses not to apply one.*

---

<sup>14</sup> 'Linear manner' refers to credits achieved in coherent modules taken as part of an award-bearing course.

<sup>15</sup> It is recognised that the term "Course Director" is not universal across all Schools, but is used here to mean the person responsible for ensuring the academic coherence of the course.

3. The Course Director may need to request additional evidence from the applicant if the formal documentation outlined above is insufficient to make an assessment of the suitability of the prior learning. They may also seek the advice of other members of the course team (e.g. module leaders).
4. Once all the information has been collected, the Course Director outlines a case to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the prior learning are a good correspondence to the intended learning outcomes of the new higher award.
5. The Course Director provides the following to the Head of Registry:
  - a) a list of the modules for which THA is to be awarded (noting the maximum levels of exemption outlined above);
  - b) copies of the degree certificate and transcript or higher education achievement record;
  - c) the academic case for THA (as outlined in paragraph 4 above).
6. The Head of Registry considers the case for THA and subsequently informs the Course Director, the Chair of the relevant examination board and the Academic Registrar of their decision.
7. The Course Director is then responsible for informing the applicant of the decision of the Head of Registry: this may involve explaining how the marks may apply in the context of the current assessment criteria, and providing the applicant with alternative preparatory work to take account of the decision.
8. The Academic Registrar ensures the official student record is updated to reflect the decision, including the migration of marks.

#### 6.5.4 Recognition of THA on formal University records

Where THA has been granted, the Chair of the relevant examination board is informed; they are also informed of the marks obtained previously, which shall count as if the student has sat the exempted module. The marks associated with modules granted on the basis of THA are therefore included in the normal calculations to determine an average mark for the taught element, or totality of the course.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the THA is recorded for future achievement records and other formal documents. Higher education achievement records (HEARs) produced by Cranfield University will identify the dates when credit for a module has been granted. Marks for THA are recorded on the HEAR, and the prior achievement and marks recognised.

## 6.6 Cranfield Credit Accumulation (CCA)

This section applies to the recognition of credit where the student has successfully undertaken and passed the module previously at Cranfield as part of another completed award. It is only available where students have passed the module previously, not where modules have been compensated.

### 6.6.1 Principles of CCA

CCA may be authorised by the Head of Registry Services, provided that:

- a) any request for CCA corresponds directly to an existing module on the applicant's programme of study. CCA is only granted for full modules; partial module exemption will not be considered.
- b) the learning credits to be used have been obtained by the applicant within the previous five years.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Obtained" is defined here as the official date on which the final assessment associated with the credits was completed. The five-year period is measured to the point of application.

- c) the application is supported by the relevant Course Director.
- d) the previous achievement of the student was not already the result of prior credit accumulation (i.e. the achievement to be recognised is the result of direct learning and assessment and not through a previous recognition scheme).
- e) the use of CCA is not precluded by a body which externally recognises the award (i.e. a professional body accreditation).

Senate has also restricted the number of external credits that can be used towards an award. These maximum limits are:

|                          | Credits |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Postgraduate Certificate | 15      |
| Postgraduate Diploma     | 30      |
| Master's                 | 50      |

These limits apply retroactively: for example, if a student has applied for 50 credits to be recognised towards a Master's qualification, but subsequently transfers to a Postgraduate Diploma, only a maximum of 30 credits can be used.

### 6.3.2 Process of applying for CCA

1. The applicant applies in writing to the relevant Course Director<sup>17</sup> with a request for CCA, either at the point of initial application or after they have received an offer.
2. The Course Director considers whether an application is appropriate, through dialogue with the applicant. The Course Director will need to establish that the module(s) previously undertaken fully correspond to the module(s) in their current form as they appear on the new course. It is advised that the Course Director obtains:
  - a) The module descriptor(s) for the module(s) to be exempted on the new course.
  - b) The contemporary module descriptor(s) for the Cranfield module(s) to be exempted as CCA prior learning.
  - c) Formal certification or confirmation of the award of the prior learning credits, including the dates of such award(s) (e.g. copies of certificates of the award/s or transcript).

*NB: The University reserves the right to apply a fee for the consideration of CCA. Any fee would be payable irrespective of the outcome of consideration of the CCA request. At present, it chooses not to apply one.*

3. Once all the information has been collected, the Course Director outlines a case to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the module(s) when taken correspond to the learning outcomes of the current module(s) for which exemption is sought.
4. The Course Director provides the following to the Head of Registry Services on a form provided:
  - a) A list of the modules for which CCA is to be awarded (noting the maximum levels of exemption outlined above);
  - b) Copies of the formal certification of prior learning;
  - c) The academic case for CCA (as outlined in paragraph 3 above).
5. The Head of Registry Services, considers the case for CCA and subsequently informs the Course Director, the Chair of the relevant examination board and the Academic Registrar of any approved CCA.

<sup>17</sup> It is recognised that the term "Course Director" is not universal across all Schools, but is used here to mean the person responsible for ensuring the academic coherence of the course.

6. The Course Director is then responsible for informing the applicant of the decision of the Head of Registry Services.
7. The Academic Registrar ensures the official student record is updated to reflect the decision.

### **6.3.3 Recognition of CCA on formal University records**

Where CCA has been granted, the Chair of the relevant examination board is informed: they should note any implications for the award of any formal qualification. CCA-accredited modules count as a “pass”, but no marks are recorded against them. Modules granted on the basis of CCA are therefore excluded from any calculations to determine an average mark for the taught element, or totality of the course.

The Academic Registrar is responsible for ensuring that the CCA is recorded for future achievement records and other formal documents. Higher education achievement records (HEARs) produced by Cranfield University will identify where credit for a module has been granted on the basis of CCA. No mark for CCA is recorded on the HEAR, but the prior achievement is recognised.

## **6.7 Admission of research students with prior research work**

The University does not normally allow students to include research in their final thesis that has been undertaken outside of their period of registration: the one exception to this is in cases where students transfer to Cranfield University from another higher education institution, usually with their primary Supervisor.

In such cases, the School is expected (as part of the process of authorising an offer) to indicate clearly to Admissions the period of registration to be outlined, taking into account their previous registration periods elsewhere and the advice of the primary Supervisor.

In addition, the School should include evidence to support the previous research studies at the point at which an offer is requested. This should be a statement from the previous higher education institution, on headed paper, which includes:

- the formal dates of registration, and intended award, at the previous institution;
- the status of ownership of the intellectual property and copyright (where relevant) of any research to be included in the proposed research activity of the student.

This statement should be provided as part of the online application review and decision.

## **6.8 Recognition of Experiential Prior Learning (RPL)**

Recognition of Experiential Prior Learning (RPL) may be taken into account for students studying for an apprenticeship funded by the UK Apprenticeship Levy, where the focus is on upskilling apprentices and developing them beyond their existing skills and knowledge. RPL assesses the skills that a student possesses prior to joining the course, and whether that student has, as part of their working life, already accumulated the knowledge and skills taught by a module. RPL is assessed on a case-by-case basis by the relevant Course Director, and approved by the Head of Registry.

Students should be aware that RPL is only valid for courses completed through the UK Apprenticeship Levy. Where a student has had formal approval for RPL taken into account for an apprenticeship course, should they transfer from Apprenticeship Levy funding to a self-funded route to continue towards the same award, the RPL will remain valid and count as credit exemption towards their intended award.

## 7 Special considerations for students from outside the European Union

In order to secure a visa, applicants who are from outside the United Kingdom (including those from EU countries) are subject to a range of additional checks and requirements over and above other applicants.

International students require the University to provide a Certificate of Acceptance of Study (CAS) in order for them to apply for a visa. Many students also require Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance. These additional processes take significant time, and international student applications routinely take an additional 6-8 weeks to convert from offer to the receipt of a visa.

### 7.1 ATAS

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) is a UK Government scheme which aims to help stop the spread of knowledge and skills that could be used in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

ATAS clearance is needed for some postgraduate study in the UK and in some areas of research that will last for longer than 6 months. The courses and programmes subject to ATAS clearance are subject-based (including all engineering degrees): Admissions maintains a list of courses and programmes that require ATAS clearance.

ATAS clearance may also be needed to change courses (or more importantly, research topics) after registration.

ATAS clearance tends to take between 4-6 weeks; applicants must demonstrate they have ATAS clearance before they apply for a visa.

### 7.2 Student visas and CASs

Under the UK's points-based immigration system, the University is required to "sponsor" international students, which includes the following undertakings:

- the University can demonstrate that the student has appropriate qualifications and experience to study;
- the University can demonstrate that the student meets the UK Home Office's requirements for English language proficiency;
- the University can demonstrate that all students have the right to study in the UK;
- the University will monitor the progress of its sponsored students and report to the UK Home Office any students who fail to arrive, cease studying or fail to make appropriate academic progress.

Admissions will only issue a CAS to an applicant if it is confident that all of their conditions of offer have been met, as well as those conditions outlined above, to comply with the University's sponsorship duties. Once a CAS has been issued, a student may apply for their visa, which can take (a further) 4-6 weeks. For this reason, **international students who apply within two months of a course start date should be encouraged to defer entry to the following intake.**

Further advice and guidance on supporting international students through the application process can be obtained from Admissions and the Student Immigration and Funding team.

## 8 Security Process – Shrivenham

As part of the United Kingdom Defence Academy, students on award and credit bearing courses based at CDS at Shrivenham are required to meet the basic security clearance requirements prior to registration on their course.

### 8.1 At time of application

#### Overseas (EU & International) MoD and Government Employees

If applicants are applying through/via International Defence Training (Army) (IDTA), then IDT will complete the security clearances on the students' behalf. There is no requirement for a further onsite security check.

#### UK MoD (Military and Civil Servant)

The MOD Registrar at Shrivenham will complete the security clearance process for UK MoD students. Cranfield does not have to undertake a further security check.

#### Complementary Business Students and Self-Funding Overseas Students

Depending on what award classification is being studied, the classification requirement will be sent to the Security Officer at Shrivenham for approval in the form of a cover sheet detailing the proposed course of study, date, classification etc. and includes a copy of the application form. As a minimum, such students must obtain at least BPSS clearance prior to arrival at Shrivenham to commence the course. The Security Officer stamps and returns the approval which indicates that an offer letter can be sent (if the student is also academically cleared).

### 8.2 Post-application - Complementary Business Students and Self-Funding Overseas Students

Once the application process has been completed any such student who will be studying onsite at Shrivenham will be subjected to at least BPSS clearance. Any applicant who does not secure BPSS clearance (or whose clearance is rescinded) will not be able to access the Shrivenham site in unaccompanied, and therefore may lead to an early termination of studies.

The University will send the student a document to complete which includes history of addresses, nationality, details of documents they will be providing for identification and referee names. They will also need to complete a Criminal Record form and send copies of specified ID's. Once this has been returned the University will request references from the referees they have provided.

Once all the information has been provided this is then sent to the Shrivenham Station Security Officer for checking. When they are satisfied, the 'pack' will be returned to the University.

Students are required to produce the documents copied to the University as part of their security clearance application (including passport), which will be checked and signed. Admissions may carry out a video call with applicants to support this. They will then be BPSS cleared for Shrivenham Station.

### 8.3 Pass issue process for Cranfield Students

Registry will liaise with the Shrivenham Main Gate reception and Security Officer to ensure that appropriate passes are provided to students who have security clearance for the site.

## 9 Undergraduate Admissions Policy

This section is replicated from section 17 of the Senate Handbook on Managing Undergraduate Courses.

The university has an approved admissions policy for the selection and admittance of undergraduate students. The below policy sets out the criteria for admission of undergraduate students. Undergraduate admissions are managed by the Admissions Office; for apprentices this is done in conjunction with the Apprenticeships Office.

### 9.1 Academic Entry Criteria

#### Minimum Entry Criteria

The University has a **Minimum Entry Criteria**, which may be met or assessed through 3 separate **Routes**. Where an applicant is working towards achieving a qualification required by an entry route or to meet the English Language proficiency requirements (see section 9.3) they may be made a conditional offer of admission.

#### Course Specific Entry Criteria

Each course may set its own entry criteria (the **Course's Specific Entry Criteria**) providing that the University's minimum entry criteria are met for the entry route chosen by an applicant. A course-specific entry criteria may contain specific entry requirements such as to require a higher tariff or grade for that chosen route, or to specify particular qualifications that applicants must hold (e.g. A Level in maths), and may specify if the applicant is required to hold (or achieve) this qualification only or a minimum mark/grade for that qualification.

### 9.2 Entry Routes

There are a number of entry routes onto undergraduate courses at MK:U.

#### Route 1 – Relevant Qualifications

Relevant Level 3 qualifications will be considered as acceptable towards meeting the entry requirements to an undergraduate course. In order to meet the University's minimum entry requirements applicants must demonstrate they meet the minimum entry tariff of **96 UCAS points** (or equivalent).

The University maintains a list of acceptable Level 3 qualifications that carry UCAS points (or equivalent) and provides examples of what a typical offer may look like. Other relevant Level 3 qualifications may also be considered towards meeting the entry requirements, as well as higher relevant qualifications (Level 4 or above).

In addition, all applicants for apprenticeship courses must be able to demonstrate that they have achieved a Level 2 qualification (e.g. GCSE etc.) in maths **and** English. Where an applicant cannot demonstrate this prior to the commencement of their course, they may be admitted onto a course on the condition that the Level 2 qualification is gained during their first year (or, for part-time students, first level) of study. Students may be prevented from progressing to a higher level of study without having satisfied an outstanding condition of entry and are unable to complete their apprenticeship without having achieved the required Level 2 qualifications.

Individual course-specific entry criteria may specify a particular Level 3 qualification (either subject, grade or both) that is required for admission to that course through this Route.

Applicants must also demonstrate that they meet the University's English language requirements (see section 9.3) prior to registration.

## **Route 2 – Approved pre-degree or partner courses**

The University may work with a number of other educational institutions to admit applicants who have completed preparatory study with that institution. Successful completion of such a programme (at an achievement level pre-agreed by the University) by an applicant may be taken as meeting the University's minimum entry criteria. A course's specific entry criteria may specify that applicants achieve a given grade in their pre-approved course or programme.

This entry route is only available to applicants who have completed or are studying towards courses which have been pre-approved as an entry route by the University. Such courses may include:

- an approved pre-degree or foundation programme delivered by either MK:U or another provider for entry into Level 4;
- a pre-approved Level 4 or Level 5 feeder course, delivered by another provider for entry into Level 5 or Level 6.

The list of pre-approved courses can be provided on request by the Admissions Office.

Where an applicant has completed a Level 4 or Level 5 feeder course, they will need to apply for their previous study to be taken into consideration as Accredited Prior Learning in order to join the appropriate Level 5 or 6 course at the University (for most pre-approved feeder courses this will be an automatic process). For more information see section 9.4 - Accredited Prior Learning.

Applicants applying through this Route may be required to complete a transition module or modules to ensure that they are fully prepared for study with the University and within their chosen discipline. Such transition modules may be bespoke modules or existing Level 4 or Level 5 modules, and may be for credit or non-credit bearing. Where a transition module is sat for credit, this would usually replace credit earned at a previous institution, and not replace credit due to be achieved as part of the level to which the applicant is applying.

In addition, all applicants for apprenticeship courses must be able to demonstrate that they have achieved a Level 2 qualification (e.g. GCSE or equivalent) in maths **and** English. Where an applicant cannot demonstrate this prior to the commencement of their course, they may be admitted onto a course on the condition that the Level 2 qualification is gained during their first year (or for part-time students, first level) of study. Students may be prevented from progressing to a higher level of study without having satisfied an outstanding condition of entry and are unable to complete their apprenticeship without having achieved the required Level 2 qualifications.

Applicants must also demonstrate that they meet the University's English language requirements (see section 9.3) prior to registration.

## **Route 3 – Individual Assessment**

As part of the University's goal to widen access to higher education through MK:U, applicants who do not meet the entry criteria for either of the above Routes may apply for an individual assessment of their ability/suitability for a course.

Individual consideration is Such an assessment would be available to applicants who do not meet the University's minimum entry criteria (or a specific entry criteria for an individual course). An Individual assessment will be conducted by the Course Lead or a nominated academic deputy, who will make a case to Admissions. alongside a central assessment of general skills.

In addition, applicants who have studied at the University as a short course for credit student (see section 9.7) may use completion of such credits as evidence of their ability to succeed on their chosen course as part of the above individual assessment.

In addition, all applicants for apprenticeship courses must be able to demonstrate that they have achieved a Level 2 qualification (e.g. GCSE or equivalent) in maths **and** English. Where an applicant cannot demonstrate this prior to the commencement of their course, they may be admitted onto a course on the condition that the Level 2 qualification is gained during their first year (or for part-time students, first level) of study. Students may be prevented from progressing to a higher level of study without having satisfied an outstanding condition of entry and are unable to complete their apprenticeship without having achieved the required Level 2 qualifications.

Applicants must also demonstrate that they meet the University’s English language requirements (see section 9.3) prior to registration.

### 9.3 English Language Proficiency

All applicants are required to demonstrate an acceptable level of English proficiency prior to registration, with the exception of:

- applicants who have obtained a Level 3 or higher education level award from a UK institution **and** have been taught and assessed in English (noting that the University may still require a formal objective English language test for applicants who only complete part of their study at a UK institution);
- applicants who have studied at secondary **and/or** higher education levels in another country or countries where the principal language is English, and which are on a list of acceptable majority English speaking countries maintained by the Admissions Office (this list is not negotiable by other staff in the University - it is compiled centrally, keeping abreast of national immigration requirements).

Where evidence of English language proficiency is required specific types of documentary evidence of English language proficiency are needed. The evidence is based partly on UK Home Office requirements for issuing visas to students from outside the UK.

Evidence of English language proficiency must be supplied prior to registration on any course; it is not possible to defer satisfaction of any condition relating to English language proficiency until a later point in a course of study.

The following external and objective test results are deemed to be acceptable levels of proficiency:

|   |               |   |
|---|---------------|---|
| IELTS   | Overall score | 6.0, with a minimum of 5.5 in each component  |
| Pearson Test of English (Academic)  | Overall score | 65  |
| TOEFL (Internet-based Test)   | Total score   | 90  |
| Cambridge English Scale   |               | 170   |
| Trinity College London: Integrated Skills in English (ISE)  |               | ISE II with either Pass, Merit or Distinction |
| Please note that these scores represent the University minimum; individual Course Leads may set higher standards, providing these are communicated in advance to applicants, e.g. in the prospectus.  |               |   |
| In addition to these minimum overall test scores, applicants are expected to achieve a balanced score across the reading, writing, listening and speaking elements of the test. The Admissions Office may refer an application back to the Course Lead if any one element of the test is particularly poor. |               |   |
| Test scores will only be accepted if issued less than two years before the proposed start date of registration.   |               |   |

The above table outlines the most common tests received by Admissions as evidence.

Admissions will also accept:

- alternative formal assessments not included in the list above, providing some comparator to the scores above can be identified; or
- information provided by NARIC or UKCISA relating to the English language proficiency normally expected of students who have obtained formal academic qualifications from institutions outside of the UK; or
- applicants who have been continuously employed within the UK for a minimum of five years, providing that a reference from their current employer makes explicit reference to their high quality spoken and written communication skills.

The University's English language requirements and exemptions apply only to the University's own English language requirements. For students who require a visa to study in the UK additional confirmation of ability to meet the UKVI's English language requirements may be required.

Where a student is unable to meet the University's English language requirements an offer may be made on the condition that they attend an approved pre-sessional English course if available, providing that they can meet any language requirements associated with any necessary visa applications.

### **Exemptions which may apply to any applicant**

Where an applicant has undertaken an objective English language test and achieved a **borderline** English language test score (i.e. 0.5 of an IELTS band lower than normally required, in one or more elements), the Admissions Office may exceptionally authorise an offer of admission, providing that a further informal assessment by staff of the University specially appointed for that purpose has taken place, and that assessment confirms that they have an appropriate English language proficiency to commence the course.

A list of qualified staff is available from the Admissions Office and, in such cases, a formal report should be received by the course team for review. The report and supporting case from the course team should be approved by the Head of the Admissions Office before an offer can be authorised, who should normally consult with the relevant Course Lead before making a decision.

Where a student does not meet the English language proficiency requirement, and the Course Lead wishes to support an offer, a request should be made to the Admissions Office to authorise the additional informal assessments and to ensure that the student meets any immigration requirements for their visa application.

In accepting the alternative documentary evidence and making an offer, the Course Lead is acknowledging that the ability of the student to learn in English is acceptable and is committing to ensuring that any individual learning support identified after registration will be provided.

On rare occasions, the Admissions Office can waive the requirement for explicit evidence of English language proficiency on the basis of compelling alternative evidence or circumstances that demonstrate the applicant's ability to study and communicate in English. The Head of the Admissions Office will consult with at least one member of the senior management team of the University in coming to a decision. The Admission Office's decision to accept or reject the alternative evidence or circumstances is not subject to any right of appeal.

### **Exemptions which may apply to specific student cohorts**

The University's Education Committee has the authority to approve exemptions to the University's English Language requirements which may apply to specific course cohorts. Special case exemptions will be reviewed every three years, which will require an assessment of the academic progress of previous cohorts.

Such cases will only be approved under exceptional circumstances, and course teams will need to provide a detailed andragogic case and business rationale to permit the requirements on individual applicants to be over-ridden, which shall include:

- background to the situation and why a special case is necessary;
- projected numbers of applicants;
- how the course team intends to ensure appropriate pre-sessional and in-sessional support for applicants and students;
- whether the course team is seeking to provide pre-applicant support (in order to prepare students for formal or informal tests);
- confirmation from the MK:U Education Lead that a process for auditing the agreed arrangements is in place (both for individual applicants and for the overall arrangements).

Any case will need to identify whether University or external resources will be needed, and how these costs will be supported. Approval of special cases requiring support from staff of the University will be subject to those resources being available.

## 9.4 Accredited Prior Learning

Applicants may request that Accredited Prior Learning (APL), also known as Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) be taken into account as part of their admissions application. Applicants must meet the entry requirements of their chosen Route; APL cannot be used as a substitute for these.

Where APL/RPL is used for students on apprenticeship courses, special consideration must be given to any Knowledge, Skills or Behaviours (KSBs) which have previously been undertaken by an apprentice, as KSBs which have already been attained are non-fundable under the UK Government's Apprenticeship Levy.

Any applications for the consideration of Accredited Prior Learning must be approved by the relevant Course Lead or equivalent, including those from students at any approved partner or feeder course.

APL will only be considered where:

- a student had achieved the pass mark of the awarding institution outright - compensated or condoned modules are not eligible to be used as APL;
- the previously earned credits substitute for whole modules of the intended course of study – APL cannot be used to exempt a student from part of a module;
- the previously earned credits can be mapped to demonstrate that the student has met the ILOs of the modules they are seeking exemption for;
- the learning credits to be used have been obtained by the applicant within the previous five years. "Obtained" is defined here as the official date on which the credits were recognised by the external institution in its formal documentation or communication;
- the application is supported by the relevant Course Lead.;
- the previous achievement of the student was not already the result of prior credit accumulation (i.e. the achievement to be recognised is the result of direct learning and assessment and not through a previous recognition scheme);
- the use of APL is not precluded by a body which externally recognises the award (i.e. a professional body accreditation).

The below maximum limits exist for the accreditation of prior learning towards an undergraduate award validated by Cranfield University.

| <b>Award</b>                                     | <b>Maximum APL credit towards intended award</b> | <b>Minimum MK:U/Cranfield University Credits</b>                  |
|--|--|---|
| Honours degree<br>(360 credits)                  | 120 Level 5 credits<br>120 Level 4 credits       | 120 Level 6 credits   |
| Non-honours degree*<br>(300 credits)             | 90 Level 5 credits<br>120 Level 4 credits        | 60 Level 6 credits<br>30 additional Level 5 or<br>Level 6 credits |
| Diploma of Higher Education<br>(240 credits)     | 120 Level 4 credits                              | 120 Level 5 credits   |
| Certificate of Higher Education<br>(120 credits) | 30 Level 4 credits                               | 90 Level 4 credits  |

\* The non-honours degree is an exit award only – applicants who join Level 6 of an award may use up to 240 credits (120 Level 4 credits and 120 Level 5 credits) as APL, however should that applicant fail to achieve all of the credits required for a Level 6 honours degree (120 further credits, towards a total of 360 credits) they will only receive a non-honours degree providing that they have achieved at least 90 credits validated by Cranfield University.

## 9.5 Offers

Applications which meet the standard entry criteria (or any course-specific entry criteria) through either Route 1 or Route 2 may be automatically processed by the admissions team, unless notified otherwise by the Course Lead. Where a student does not meet the standard entry requirements (Route 3), approval of an offer of admission can only be given by the relevant Course Lead.

Where an applicant has demonstrated that they have met or are expected to meet the academic entry requirements of their course they will be made an offer, subject to:

- the applicant completing any Level 3 qualifications they have used as evidence of their ability (Route 1);
- the applicant completing any Level 4 or 5 qualifications they have used for evidence of their ability (Route 2);
- the applicant demonstrating satisfactory completion of Level 2 English and maths qualifications (apprenticeship applicants on all Routes);
- the applicant demonstrating that they meet the University's English Language Requirements (all Routes).

Applicants should not normally be made unconditional offers where they are admitted without either formal assessment or completion of relevant qualifications – all applicants should have demonstrated evidence of their ability to meet the University's minimum entry criteria (through any of the three Routes). Any request for an unconditional offer to be made should be approved by the relevant MK:U Education Lead.

Applicants who have applied for entry under the individual assessment route (Route 3) should only be made an offer of admission once that assessment has been satisfactorily completed. For applicants to apprenticeship courses any offer may still be conditional on that applicant demonstrating that they have satisfied both the Level 2 English and maths and English language requirements.

## 9.6 Visiting Students

The University may from time-to-time welcome visiting students, usually as part of a formal agreement with another institution to study towards an award with that institution. Visiting students must be registered with another higher education institution. Where a visiting student is working

towards academic credit of the University as part of such a formal agreement, they are expected to meet the University's minimum entry criteria and English language requirements.

## **9.7 Short Course Students**

Applicants may join specific modules or groups of modules as short courses for credit (SCC) without meeting the full entry criteria, either for professional development purposes or with the intention of using credits as evidence of their ability for admission to an award-bearing course (Route 3). Any application to study as a short course for credit student is subject to the approval of the Course Lead or their nominated deputy, who by approving any application is confirming that they believe a SCC applicant has sufficient academic ability and English language skills to complete their chosen module(s). The University is not able to sponsor international students for a visa to study SCCs.

## **9.8 Admissions Feedback and Complaints**

Applications may be unsuccessful for a number of reasons. Sometimes there are more applications than places on a particular course, or an application may not meet the minimum entry requirements.

The University does not routinely provide feedback to applicants on the reasons for our decisions. If an applicant wishes to request feedback on an unsuccessful application they may do so by contacting the Admissions Office. Complaints about all admissions decisions will be dealt with in line with the University's standard admissions complaints process, which can be found on the University's website.

## 10 Admissions feedback, complaints and appeals

The University has an admissions feedback, complaints and appeals statement, below, which is applicable to both taught and research students. This statement is made available to applicants on the University website.

### Admissions feedback, complaints and appeals

#### Admissions feedback

Applications may be unsuccessful for a number of reasons. Sometimes there are more applications than places on a particular course, or an application may not meet the standard entry requirements.

We don't routinely provide feedback to applicants on the reasons for our decisions. If you wish to request feedback on an unsuccessful application, please email our Admissions Office.

#### Complaints and appeals

We are committed to ensuring that all applications are considered fairly and within our defined procedures. Where applicants require sponsorship under the UK's points-based immigration system, we are subject to external restrictions and requirements, which may affect our offer decision.

We will therefore only consider appeals or complaints in the following circumstances:

1. if you believe there has been a significant failure in the admissions procedure, or
2. if you believe you have been discriminated against unlawfully.

Cranfield University will not consider complaints or appeals based on any other reason, including where incomplete or inaccurate information has been provided. In line with our data protection policies, we don't consider any appeals or complaints from anyone on your behalf. We do not share personal information with anyone outside the University, without your express consent.

Appeals or complaints should be made by email to the Admissions Office.

You should receive a response acknowledging your complaint, or appeal, within 10 working days.

The Head of the Admissions Office or a senior colleague will review your complaint or appeal and consult the relevant Head of School, or an appropriate representative. You will receive a full reply to your complaint, or appeal, including a reason for any final decision. This may include more detail about the initial outcome of your application. The outcome of any decision will be the final position of the University. The University will retain a record of your complaint or appeal for monitoring purposes to enable us to regularly review and improve our service.

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Owner</b>                                  | Academic Registrar                 |
| <b>Department</b>                             | Education Services                 |
| <b>Implementation date</b>                    | September 2023                     |
| <b>Approval by and date</b>                   | Academic Registrar, September 2023 |
| <b>Version number and date of last review</b> | Version 2.7 September 2023         |
| <b>Next review by</b>                         | September 2025                     |