

Policy and Procedures for the Admission of under 18s onto Undergraduate Programmes

1. General statement

- 1.1 This policy intends to clarify the procedures that will apply if the University of Reading (the “University”) receives an application from an individual who will be 16 or 17 years old when they start their course.
- 1.2 The University is committed to ensuring that all admission decisions are fair, transparent and conducted according to our published policies¹, procedures and relevant legislation in force at the date of the decision.
- 1.3 Any decision to make an offer of admission will be based on the applicant’s academic suitability, any personal statement and accompanying reference. The issue of age should not preclude an applicant from receiving an offer.
- 1.4 The record of an applicant who is 16 or 17 years old will be flagged for administrative and support purposes only.
- 1.5 Although most students at the University are over the age of 18, we welcome younger applicants with the aptitude to thrive at the University.
- 1.6 It is unlikely that an applicant who is 16 or 17 years old will be in a position to apply for a postgraduate programme of study however, in any situation where an applicant for a postgraduate programme will be under 18 at the start of their programme, the principles of this policy will be applied.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 16- and 17-year-olds living in England are considered by law to be children. This means the University needs to have special arrangements in place to fulfil its obligations to them. Further information can be found in the University’s Policy and Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults².
- 2.2 In this policy, where reference is made to a parent this includes anyone who is acting in loco parentis such as a legal guardian in the UK.
- 2.3 This policy and procedures applies to all modes of study (full-time, part-time and distance learning), foundation programmes, pre-sessional English programmes and apprenticeships.

¹ The University’s Admissions Policies <http://www.reading.ac.uk/admissions-policies.aspx>

² The University’s Policy and Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults can be found at <https://static.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/GovernanceZone/UoR-Safeguarding-children-and-adults-at-risk-Policy-Oct-2023.docx>

2.4 This policy will apply to applications received direct to the University and through UCAS, from Home (including Islands) and international (both EU and non-EU) individuals.

2.5 Once the student reaches the age of 18 this policy will no longer apply.

3. Parental/Guardian Responsibilities

3.1 All applicants aged 16 or 17 years old in education in the UK are required to have a parent or legal guardian resident in the UK. The University of Reading is unable to act in loco parentis (accepting legal responsibility on behalf of the parent). The parent(s) of an international applicant will be required to nominate, and provide details of, a suitable individual in the UK who can be contacted, if necessary. If no such person is known to the parents concerned this will not necessarily prevent an offer of a place being made. There are a number of organisations in the UK that may act as guardian. Further advice can be sought from the local authority.

3.2 Some programmes of study are bound by external professional or placement requirements concerning age. In this instance, the University may request that the applicant defer their application until they meet the age requirement. Details on deferred entry can be found in the Admissions Policy³. Alternatively, the University may recommend a change of course. The University may refuse admittance to a programme where the applicant does not meet necessary age requirements.

4. Procedure

4.1 Any decision to make an offer to an underage applicant will be communicated by email and, where applicable, electronically via UCAS. The University communication will also include the condition that a Parental Consent form is completed.

4.2 Where the applicant is a minor and an offer of admission is made, he or she will need to ensure that the Parental Consent form is signed by one of his/her parents in time for the student to enrol on their programme. If, having considered the statements on the online form parents do not wish the student to participate in activities that any student is normally expected to undertake, they must inform the University before the student accepts Reading's offer of a place. In this instance, the University may decide to amend the offer so that a place is offered for deferred entry, or the University may make the applicant an offer on an alternative course, or may withdraw the offer. An under 18-year-old student will not be permitted to enrol at the University without having submitted a completed and signed Parental Consent form.

4.3 If an alternative course offer is made and accepted, consideration for change of course back to the original choice must be made in accordance with University processes and will only be considered if the applicant meets the entry requirements at the point at which they make the request

5. Contracts

5.1 A person who is 16 or 17 years old has the status to enter into necessary contracts for education and accommodation, but until their 18th birthday will not be legally competent to enter into all legal contracts. An applicant who is 16 or 17 years old will be able to apply, register personally with the University, and enter into a legal contract for education in the same way as an adult student.

³ The University's Admissions Policies <http://www.reading.ac.uk/admissions-policies.aspx>

- 5.2 Should any occasion arise which the student needs to enter into a further contract with the University, which may not be legally binding due to age, the University may request that a parent act as a guarantor for that contract.
- 5.3 The parent(s) and if applicable the applicant's UK Guardian shall be required to read and sign the Parental/Guardian Consent for a Minor (Under 18) On Entry form (Schedule 1 to this Policy) confirming, among other things, that they shall act as a guarantor for any sums owed to the University by the applicant. Should a parent/guardian be unwilling to sign the form at Schedule 1 and accept liability for the minor student's tuition fees, accommodation fees and other applicable fees⁴, the University may decide to amend the applicant's offer to a deferred place.
- 5.4 For students staying in University-managed accommodation, parents or guardians are required to read and sign the Student Residency Agreement⁵.
- 5.5 The applicant shall be required to agree to the University's Terms and Conditions for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and its Tuition Fees Policy⁶, which set out the students' rights and responsibilities as a student, and they form a legally binding contract between the student and the University. They state the obligations of both parties to each other as well as information on programmes, tuition fees, complaints, cancellation and termination rights, data protection and intellectual property principles. If the applicant does not accept the terms and conditions, they cannot become a member of the University and will not be able to study here.
- 5.6 Consequences for the non-payment of a student's tuition fees or accommodation fees are set out in the Tuition Fees Policy and the Student Residence Agreement. These include the student's suspension or withdrawal from the University. The University reserves the right to take appropriate action against students who fail to pay any fees owed, or to make satisfactory arrangements to pay in line with its policies.

6. Accommodation

- 6.1 The University of Reading does not deem Halls of Residence to be suitable environments for students who are not at least 16 years old.
- 6.2 Accommodation⁷ is only available to students if they will be aged 16 or older at the start of their residency period (as indicated in the offer of accommodation).

⁴ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/accommodation/Aaccommodation-booking-TCs-2024-25.pdf>

⁵ See the Student Residence Agreement

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/accommodation/Aaccommodation-booking-TCs-2024-25.pdf>

⁶ Information and the University's Terms and Conditions and Tuition Fee Policy can be found at:

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/study/coming-to-reading>

⁷ Information on the University of Reading's student accommodation can be found at

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/accommodation>

- 6.3 Students can apply for accommodation at any time but will only be offered accommodation, if available with a start date after the date that they have turned 16. Parents/ guardians may therefore need to make alternative arrangements for the applicant's accommodation in the UK for the whole/part year if University accommodation cannot be provided. If this is the case, parents/guardians will be required to sign that they have arranged for the minor to be placed in private accommodation for the duration of their studies whilst under the age of 16.
- 6.4 A room in Halls is guaranteed for undergraduate students aged 16 and above, who firmly accept their offer of a place, submit their application for accommodation by 1st August (for Autumn entry) and meet any outstanding conditions on their academic offer from the University by the date specified in the offer letter, or subsequently communicated by the Admissions Team. This is usually the first Wednesday in September.
- 6.5 Where Students under the age of 18 apply for accommodation supplied by the University, we ask that the parent/guardian review the Student Residency Agreement⁸ before the student accepts it.

7. UK Visas and Immigration

- 7.1 The University only has a licence to sponsor students under the Student route and cannot sponsor Child students.
- 7.2 The University must comply with regulations set by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)⁹. As such, parents or guardians must ensure suitable care arrangements are in place for a minor who will study in the UK and are sponsored by the University under its licence.
- 7.3 A 16 or 17-year-old student route visa student has the legal right to live independently in the UK, and so may make their own arrangements for accommodation. However, they require the consent of their parent(s) to do this, and to travel to the UK (if they are applying from overseas).
- 7.4 16 or 17 year olds who are living independently, must provide the UKVI a letter from their parent(s) or legal guardian(s), confirming:
- The relationship between them and their parent(s) or legal guardian(s);
 - That their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have given their consent to the application;
 - That their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have given their consent to their living and care arrangements in the UK; and
 - That the parent(s) or legal guardians(s) consent to the child's travel to and reception arrangement in the UK, if the application is for entry clearance. If the

⁸ See the Student Residency Agreement

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/content/PDFs/files/accommodation/Aaccommodation-booking-TCs-2024-25.pdf>

⁹ Further information on UK Visas and Immigration can be found in The University of Reading's Admissions Policy Covering Taught Programmes at Undergraduate and Postgraduate level:

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/admissions/UoR - Admissions Policy for Taught Programmes - 2017.pdf>

parent/legal guardian has sole custody of the child, they must sign the letter. If they do not, the letter must confirm that each of the parents or legal guardians agrees to the contents of the letter and it must be signed by each parent or legal guardian.

7.5 Students under the age of 18 can contact the International Student Advisory Team¹⁰ for a template letter then can use when applying for their visa.

7.6 16 and 17 year olds must also provide evidence of their relationship with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Acceptable evidence includes a copy of one of the following documents:

- Birth certificate showing the names of the parent(s)/legal guardian(s),
- Certificate of adoption showing the name(s) of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s),
- A court or government document naming the legal guardian(s) or establishing the sole responsibility of one parent.

If the original document is not in English it must be accompanied by a fully certified translation.

7.7 The University will not issue a CAS to a 16 or 17 year old unless it has received the signed Parental Consent Form.

7.8 The University is bound by Home Office rules regarding Student route visas. This means that the University is unable to sponsor (for visa purposes) students under the age of sixteen years, including issuing a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) to someone who is under the age of sixteen on the date the CAS is assigned

8. Field trips

8.1 Programmes may involve compulsory or optional field trips, excursions or other periods of study away from the University. Subject to the University's general duties under the law¹¹, the University is not able to take any additional responsibility for a student who is a minor in relation to such activities.

9. Restriction on activities

9.1 Under UK law, minors are unable to purchase alcohol, tobacco, solvents, fireworks, firearms and knives.

9.2 As the University has a number of licensed premises on campus, students under the age of 18 are not allowed to attempt to buy alcohol. Students are subject to random checks to ensure their age whilst in on-campus licensed premises. They are also restricted from entering Nightclubs unless the event is specifically for under 18s. If accompanied by an adult, 16- and 17-year-olds are able to drink (but not purchase) beer, wine or cider with a meal. Some pubs and bars will admit entry to minors but they will not be allowed to purchase alcohol.

¹⁰ For contact details please visit <https://www.reading.ac.uk/essentials/International/International-Student-Advisory-Team>

¹¹ Full details of the University's Health and Safety Policy can be found at: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/health-safety-services/policies-and-procedures> in the 'University Health and Safety Policy' section

9.3 In England there are also age restrictions on certain films and video games and it is illegal for a minor to gamble online or in a gambling establishment.

10. Data Protection

10.1 The University collects and retains certain types of data, in various formats, about its applicants, current and past students in order that it can fulfil its functions as an education provider.

10.2 The University must comply with its obligations under data protection laws. Although those under 18 years of age are regarded as children under the law, students under the age of 18, in particular older teenagers who may be considered old enough to understand those laws and to exercise their own rights independently, have the same protections and expectations as those over 18, which means any disclosures to parents (and third parties) must be in compliance with those laws.

10.3 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example those connected with serious concerns for welfare, sharing of information is likely to only be done with the student's consent. Where consent has been identified as the lawful grounds for sharing information, the University is not able to give information to parents/guardians regarding the student's progress, results or any other personal circumstance unless the student has given their specific consent or where we come to the view that there is a specific and serious risk to the safety of the individual that parents/guardians or other authorities, such as the police, should be made aware of. However, if the student fails to pay any sums agreed on contract, then it will be necessary to disclose this to the guarantor and possibly to a debt collection agency. Details of the University's Data Protection policy and its Student Privacy Notice for students are published on our website.¹²

11. Support and information

11.1 Support and further information for applicants under 18 years old and their parents can be obtained from the Admissions Office on ugadmissions@enquiries.reading.ac.uk

11.2 The University has developed some general advice for students who are under the age of 18 when they become students. [You can read this information here.](#)

¹² Full details of the University's Data Protection Policy can be found at: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/imps/-/media/project/functions/information-management-and-policy-services/documents/2016dataprotectionpolicycurrent.pdf?la=en&hash=13ED200E3901B12C61E5803395EFD603>

Schedule 1

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FOR A MINOR (UNDER 18) ON ENTRY

Before your child/ward's place at the University of Reading can be confirmed, you will need to sign the Parental Consent Form A. If you are not over 18 and do not live in the UK you will also need to get a UK resident to act as your child/ward's guardian and they will need to sign Form B.

Should a parent/guardian be unwilling to consent under this letter by signing the form below and accept liability for the applicant's tuition fees, accommodation fees and other applicable fees, the University may decide to amend the applicant's offer to a deferred place.

Signing the Parental consent form means that you:

- **Understand that by signing this form you agree to act as a guarantor, and therefore accept liability for your child's/ward's debts to the University of Reading including, but not limited to, tuition fees, additional costs, fines and accommodation charges incurred by the student.**
- Understand that if your child is or 16 or 17-year-old holder of a student route visa they have the legal right to live independently in the UK, and so may make their own arrangements for accommodation. By signing this form you have given your consent as a parent for them to do this, and to travel to the UK (if they are applying from overseas).
- You are confirming:
 - The relationship between you and them as their parent(s) or legal guardian(s);
 - That as their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) you have given their consent to the application;
 - That as their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) you have given their consent to them living independently in the UK; and
 - That as their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) you have given their consent to their independent travel to the UK.
- Understand and accept that the University of Reading does not accept parental responsibility for your child/ward. However, the University of Reading may authorise emergency medical treatment, acting on medical advice in the best interests of the student, in the unlikely event of a medical emergency where a student is unable to consent (at the age of 16 patients in the UK are able to give consent for most medical or dental treatment without a parent's knowledge. Treatment is confidential) and it is not possible to contact a parent or UK Guardian.
- Understand and accept that the University of Reading is an adult environment and that your child/ward will generally be treated as an adult and to assume adult levels of responsibility. Students are expected to have the necessary skills to study, live independently and socialise alongside people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Places are offered at the University of Reading on the understanding that the student will be able to adapt to living away from home and to looking after themselves in all practical matters.
- Understand all students have free choice about how they spend their spare time and there is no direct supervision outside of contact hours with their academic departments.
- Are responsible for ensuring that the University has been informed of any disability or

special requirements of the student.

- Understand that your child/ward, if living in University accommodation, will be living in mixed accommodation with students who are over the age of 18.
- Consent to the activities that your child/ward will be undertaking as a necessary part of their studies, including field trips.
- Understand and accept that the University of Reading's internet and e-mail services are provided on the principle of unsupervised and unmonitored access. Students are expected to act in an adult and responsible manner when using these facilities and to abide by the University's computing use policy.
- Understand that if your child/ward is under 16 when they enrol at the University of Reading the University cannot provide accommodation, or accept responsibility for providing accommodation, for your child/ward. You undertake to arrange for your child/ward to be placed in private accommodation and to live independently, for the duration of their studies whilst under the age of 16 at the University of Reading.
- Understand and accept that while studying at the University of Reading your child/ward will be subject to UK law and University contract, rules, regulations and procedures.
- Under UK law, minors are unable to purchase alcohol, tobacco, solvents, fireworks, firearms and knives. As the University has a number of licensed premises on campus, students under the age of 18 are not allowed to attempt to buy alcohol. Students are subject to random checks to ensure their age whilst in on-campus licensed premises. They are also restricted from entering Nightclubs unless the event is specifically for under 18s. If accompanied by an adult, 16 and 17 year olds are able to drink (but not purchase) beer, wine or cider with a meal. Some pubs and bars will admit entry to minors but they will not be allowed to purchase alcohol. There are also age restrictions on certain films, video games and it is illegal for a minor to gamble online or in a gambling establishment.
- Understand and accept that under the Data Protection laws the University of Reading cannot release any information relating to your child/ward, either academic or personal, without your child/ward giving the University express consent for this, either to you or the designated UK Guardian.

Form A: PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM - TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN

Applicant's first/given name:	
Applicant's surname/family name:	
Applicant's personal email address (not a recruitment agency):	
Applicant's UCAS ID number: <i>(leave blank if did not apply through UCAS)</i>	
Applicant's University of Reading ID number:	
Course applied for:	
Applicant's date of birth:	
Your first/given name:	
Your surname/family name:	
Your relationship to the Applicant:	
Your full postal address:	
Your telephone number:	
Your email address:	

<p>I confirm that I am over 18 and live in the UK and will be classed as the applicants UK Guardian:</p> <p><i>If you do not live in the UK you will need a UK resident to act as your child/ward's guardian and they will need to complete Form B</i></p>	
<p>I declare that I have read and accept the above Parental/Guardian Consent for a Minor (Under 18) on Entry conditions: (Signature and date)</p>	

Form B: TO BE COMPLETED BY UK GUARDIAN IF PARENT DOES NOT LIVE IN UK

This form should be completed by a person over the age of 18 who is willing to act as a UK Guardian for your child if you do not live in the UK

UK Guardian's full name (and name of Guardianship Agency if appropriate):	
UK Guardian's relationship to the Applicant: (e.g. Guardianship Agency, Aunt, family friend):	
UK Guardian's date of birth (must be over the age of 18):	
UK Guardian's postal address (must be in the UK):	
UK Guardian's UK telephone number:	
UK Guardian's email address:	
I confirm that I am over 18 and live in the UK and will be classed as the applicants UK Guardian:	
I declare that I have read and accept the above Parental/Guardian Consent for a Minor (Under 18) on Entry conditions: Signature and date:	

Version control

Version	Keeper	Reviewed	Approved by	Approval date
1.0	Director of Admissions	Annually	University Board for Teaching & Learning	2010
1.1	Head of Admissions	Annually	Senate	July 2018
1.2	Head of Admissions and Enquiries Management	Every three years	Senate	December 2024