Centre for Alternative Technology
Graduate School of the Environment
Student Admission Policy and Procedures

Institutional Context

This Admissions Policy takes account of the Higher Education sector guidelines within the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and specifically the advice and guidance on admissions, recruitment and widening access . The policy is designed to ensure that applicants are considered for a programme of study on the basis of their skills and abilities to benefit and thrive from their chosen course.

CAT also recognises the following legislation as relevant to its admission processes:
1. The Equality Act (2010)
2. Freedom of Information Act (2000)
3. Data Protection Act (2018)
4. Human Rights Act (1998)

We welcome applications from motivated students with appropriate qualifications, whether traditional or non-traditional, academic or vocational.

Our admissions processes will be administered in accordance with the admissions policies and supporting documents of our validating bodies, the University of East London and Liverpool John Moores University.

The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) is committed to procedures for the recruitment and admission of students that are fair, explicit and implemented consistently. CAT aims to provide equality of opportunity and ensure that no prospective student is treated less favourably on any grounds and will continue to develop widening access strategies and policies in line with local and national guidance. CAT operates a policy of zero tolerance towards any form of discrimination and the detailed protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. CAT values the diversity of its student population and widening access to higher education is firmly embedded within this policy and the culture of CAT.

1. **Principles of Admission**
   1.1. The admission of applicants to programmes of study is solely at the discretion of Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in accordance with eligibility criteria agreed with the University of East London (UEL) and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU).

1.2. There will be a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to fulfil the objectives of the programme beyond the threshold level and to achieve the standard required for the award.

1.3. There will be a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to fulfil CAT's requirements in terms of knowledge and skills for the award to which a programme leads.

1.4. CAT will apply the principle of equality of opportunity to its admission activities and will encourage the recruitment of local and regional students and those with additional learning needs.

1.5. The information supplied to prospective students during recruitment activities and documentation is accurate and reliable, and enables them to make informed decisions higher education at CAT

1.6. In considering individual applicants for admission to a programme of study CAT will seek evidence of personal, professional and educational experiences that provide indications of ability to meet the demands of the programme. This information is processed by the admissions team in accordance with CATs privacy policy and the Data Protection Act 2018.

1.7. Applicants whose first language is not English are asked to provide evidence of English language proficiency at IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent) with a minimum 6.0 in each component being required. This is proven by a valid English Language proficiency certificate, or other proof such as evidence that they completed their first degree in English or a reference from their employer confirming their English language competency. We also accept other evidence, for example, if they have completed their first degree entirely through the medium of English language or if they have worked for a company in the UK or who conduct their business in English, we will accept an endorsement from their employer

1.8. No student may be admitted concurrently for more than one full-time programme of either UEL or LJMU (or any combination of awards) except with the approval of the UEL or LJMU Academic Boards.

1.9. Any applicant who is unsuccessful and feels that they have been unfairly dealt with can use the CAT Complaints Procedure to make a complaint.

1.10. To maintain quality of the student experience, CAT's programmes will have a maximum cohort size. Once that cohort size is reached then no further offers of admissions will be made to the programme. Any outstanding admissions offers made to prospective students will be honoured. Further applicants to closed courses, will either be offered places on alternative programmes for which they are also eligible or will be added to a waiting list for the programme they originally applied for. The waiting list will be considered in application date order should places become available before the course commences.

1.11. Having a prior criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from being offered a place at CAT. However, CAT does require students to disclose criminal convictions and failure to do so is considered a serious matter and may result in a place being withdrawn or a student being asked to leave CAT prior to completion of their programme of study.

1.12. Should it become clear during the admissions process that an applicant presents a potential safeguarding risk to CAT staff or students, or the general public, CAT reserves the right to withdraw an offer of study or asking the student to leave CAT prior to completion of their programme of study, module or short course.

1.13. CAT reserves the right to cancel or withdraw any offer made on the basis of an application that has been found to contain fraudulent information.

2. General Admission Requirements (for all programmes of study)

2.1. CAT bases its admission requirements on nationally recognised, formal minimum attainment levels. The normal entry requirements are set out in section 3. These should be regarded as indicative, and individual applicants may be admitted on the basis of a wide range of qualifications or experience provided the principles of admission outlined above are met.

2.2. Each approved programme of study will specify the requirements for admission to that programme by:
(a) identifying the knowledge and skills required at admission and relating these to the length, content, and objectives of the programme;
(b) describing the way in which these arrangements will accord with the standard of the award;
(c) setting out the criteria and means by which the suitability of the student for admission will be judged;
(d) setting out, where appropriate, the procedures to be used in assessing any previous work of students admitted to points other than the beginning of the programme.

3. Programme Admission Requirements (for each level of award)

3.1. M.Arch Sustainable Architecture (with ARB Part 2 prescription), Full-Time and Part-Time Programmes
This programme is designed for students who want to become professionally qualified as an architect in the United Kingdom. It is prescribed by the UK's Architects' Registration Board (ARB) and is designed to provide architectural training that will enable students who satisfactorily complete the programme to gain exemption from Part 2 of ARB's qualifying (to be an architect) examination.

The normal entrance requirement is a first degree in Architecture that is also prescribed by ARB as giving exemption from Part 1 of ARB's qualifying (to be an architect) examination. However, CAT will also consider applications from candidates with other, relevant (to Architecture), degree-level (i.e. level 6 and above) qualifications that do not carry exemption from ARB's Part 1 examination. It does so on the strict understanding that satisfactory completion of its M.Arch programme does not entitle such students to register as an architect in these circumstances in which the student lacks a required antecedent qualification, e.g. ARB Part 2 without Part 1.

All applicants who do not hold a qualification that exempts them from the ARB's Part 1 examination will be advised of these aforementioned implications at application stage and, again, at offer stage.

3.2. Master's Programmes

The normal entrance requirement for a Master's programme is a second-class honours degree or postgraduate diploma from a recognised university or equivalent. Alternatively, we will accept a professional qualification in a relevant technical, social, scientific or professional subject that is externally recognised as equivalent to an Honours degree. Other qualifications or experience which clearly demonstrate that a candidate possesses appropriate knowledge and skills at Honours degree standard may be acceptable.

4. **Admission with Advanced Standing**

4.1. Subject to the requirements of the relevant programme regulations, CAT and UEL/LJMU have discretion to admit a student with exemption from certain elements of a programme. This will occur when it is clear that an applicant has fulfilled some of the progression and assessment requirements of the programme of study by means other than attendance on the planned programme and will be able by completing the remaining requirements to fulfil the objectives of the programme and to attain the standard required for the award.

4.2. A student admitted with exemption from certain elements of a programme is not required to take those elements but may, as appropriate, be required to take alternatives; or may be admitted with specific credit, which means that the student is considered to have passed certain elements.

4.3. CAT reserves the right to assess applicants' prior learning by requiring them to take the normal progression assessments of the programme or some other appropriate form of assessment.

4.4. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for an applicant to be advised to follow a programme which does not normally contain an element of supervised work experience.

4.5. A student will not be admitted to a point more than two-thirds through the taught element of a programme.

4.6. Admission with academic credit is otherwise subject to the same principles as admission to the beginning of the programme.

5. Assessment of Accredited Certificated Learning

5.1. In assessing claims for admission to a programme of study with advanced standing in respect of accredited certificated learning CAT and UEL/LJMU will give consideration to, inter alia, the following:

(a) Credit Transfer
Applicants who have successfully completed the whole or part of a comparable programme at UEL, LJMU or another institution may be admitted to an appropriate point on an approved programme.

(b) Vocational and Professional Qualifications
Applicants holding vocational or professional qualifications may be admitted with specific credit to an appropriate point on a programme.

(c) BTEC/EdExcel and SCOTVEC Higher Awards
Applicants holding a Higher National Certificate or Diploma of BTEC/EdExcel or SCOTVEC may be considered for admission with specific credit.

(d) Overseas Awards
An award gained overseas may be judged acceptable for entry with specific credit.

6. Assessment of Prior Unaccredited Experiential Learning

6.1. Where applicants' prior uncertificated learning includes experience or industrial training which can be assessed with sufficient accuracy, it may be used to give entry with either specific or general credit.

6.2. In assessing for admission to a programme of study with advanced standing in respect of accredited experiential learning, CAT, LJMU and UEL will have regard inter alia to the following.

a) Responsibility rests with the applicant for making a claim to have acquired knowledge and skills and for supporting the claim with appropriate evidence.

b) The learning derived from experience must be identified in order to be assessed.

c) The identification of prior learning comes through systematic reflection on experience, the writing of clear statements about what was actually learned and the collection and collation of evidence to support those statements.

      d) The methods of assessment must be such that the judgement made can be considered by external examiners and Assessment Boards.

6.3. Further details and procedures for AEL are included in UEL's Policy on the Accreditation of Prior Certificated and Experiential Learning Policy and supporting documentation or in LJMU's Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning Policy.

References

- UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access (2018) https://www.qaa.ac.uk//en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access
- UEL MANUAL OF GENERAL REGULATIONS Part 2 - Admission of Students https://www.uel.ac.uk/sites/default/files/5671.pdf
- LJMU Admissions Policy https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/~/media/sample-sharepoint-libraries/policy-documents/8.pdf?la=en
- UEL's Policy on the Accreditation of Prior Certificated and Experiential Learning Policy https://www.uel.ac.uk/sites/default/files/5739.pdf
- LJMU's Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning Policy https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/~/media/sample-sharepoint-libraries/policy-documents/188.pdf?la=en

Amendments to CAT Admissions Policy Dated September 2019

Minor typographical changes made for clarity

Introduction updated to reference validating university polies and legal context of admissions.

1.2. Applicant expectation amended to clarify expectations of student ambition

1.5 and 1.6 updates to a clearly state what information of an applicant is required and how data will be processed within CATs privacy policy

1.7 additional clarification of IELTS standards for entry

1.10. Statement on course entry numbers, and maintenance of a waiting list should applications exceed that number

1.12 and 1.13 additional criteria for CAT to withdraw an offer if there is a perceived risk to other students or staff at CAT and/or the application contains fraudulent information.

3.2 update to Masters entry criteria to second class honours equivalence

References section added

Date Document Approved: July 2022
By: Academic Council
To be reviewed in: September 2025