

Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy

1 Introduction

This Policy states the Springfield Research University's (*the University*) position on key matters relating to recruitment, selection, admissions and widening participation activity. This policy complies with relevant legislation and takes account of the principles outlined by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group. It is a public document and as such is written for an applicant audience.

This Policy is underpinned by our institutional strategic priorities, which are articulated in full in [the University's Vision and Strategic Plan](#).

Our Student Charter is an important part of how we establish and maintain clear mutual expectations for the experience of all students. It sets out what we can expect from each other as partners in a learning community.

2 Purpose

To provide policy information to enquirers, applicants, parents and advisors about recruitment, selection and admissions at the University. It is the policy framework for all staff who are involved in recruitment, selection and admissions activity.

3 Scope

This policy covers applications for places on our undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and continuing professional development courses leading to the award of a degree, diploma or certificate, except the courses indicated. Courses may be offered in the one or more of the following study modes: full time, part time, distance or blended learning. Study modes available for each individual course will be detailed in the course description.

Recruitment, selection and admission policies, practices and procedures for validated programmes run by partner institutions are the responsibility of the partner institution and are not covered by this policy. All partner institutions are required to have appropriate policies, procedures and practices in place.

4 Equality and Diversity

The University is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of its community, including those that seek to apply to the University, are treated with respect and dignity. We aim to create a culture of diversity within our community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution and individuality.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of:

- age
- disability
- gender identity (a personal sense of one's own gender. This can correspond to or differ from the sex we are assigned at birth) marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race - (includes: race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins)
- religion or belief including philosophical belief and a lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation (including civil partnership status)

The University's Equality and Diversity policy is applicable to all applicants, students and staff.

5 Responsibility for Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation Activities

The University is committed to providing a professional recruitment and admissions service to all our applicants.

Recruitment and admissions activities are carried out in partnership between different parts of the University, in accordance with this Policy. As such, responsibility for different aspects of recruitment and admissions are shared between Academic Schools and Divisions and teams within the Directorate for the Student Experience (DSE).

Academic Schools and Divisions are responsible for:

- ⊙ Determining selection criteria and setting up transparent assessment processes.
- ⊙ Academic decisions and making offers to individual applicants, recording justifications for decisions and providing feedback as appropriate.
- ⊙ Providing accurate and relevant information to prospective students.
- ⊙ Communicating with applicants during the admissions process, providing information about the format of interviews and post-application visit days and the nature of any assessment or selection practices.
- ⊙ Ensuring admissions procedures are fair, consistently applied and compliant with University admissions policy.

The Directorate for the Student Experience (DSE) is responsible for:

- ⊙ Overseeing University recruitment and admissions processes, ensuring, in collaboration with Academic Schools and Divisions, that prospective students are supported from initial enquiry to registration.
- ⊙ Coordinating an applicant enquiry management process that meets the information needs of prospective students and other key stakeholders.
- ⊙ Inducting new staff into recruitment and admissions roles, providing appropriate instruction and support.
- ⊙ Providing training on key topics and sharing best practice to ensure front-line staff can fulfil their role competently and, in a manner, consistent with this policy.
- ⊙ Disseminating information about national and institutional developments that impact recruitment and admissions practices.
- ⊙ Providing information on international qualification equivalencies ensuring fairness and consistency of interpretation.
- ⊙ The provision of information, advice and guidance to prospective students from all

backgrounds through a centrally coordinated programme of SADC and overseas recruitment and outreach activity.

The Director for the Student Experience (DSE) is responsible for undertaking the policy impact assessment and monitoring the implementation of this policy ensuring that it is reviewed and best serves our applicants and the University's aims in the light of changing circumstances. Working groups and networks are established to progress specific issues and agendas. In particular:

- ⊙ The Intake Management Group: Its main objective is to monitor likely student enrolment against approved targets and to ensure appropriate action is taken in response to any anticipated shortfalls or over-recruitment.
- ⊙ The Student Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Management Group: Its main purpose is to oversee the operational delivery of the University's UG and PGT student intake, marketing and recruitment strategies.

The Admissions Management Group: Its main purpose is to lead on delivery and decision making in relation to admissions operational activities. This includes making recommendations and feeding into other groups and also the implementation of and adherence to policies and procedures.

- ⊙ The Access and Participation Strategy Group: Oversees strategic direction in relation to Widening Participation. Chaired by the Vice-President for Teaching, Learning and Students and with academic representation across Faculties and includes professional services staff from the Directorate for the Student Experience (DSE) and the Division of Communication, Marketing and Student Recruitment (CMSR).

All staff with designated recruitment, selection and admissions responsibilities must be familiar with this policy, and the associated procedures relevant to their areas of responsibility. The University will provide appropriate guidance, training and support for all staff engaged in recruitment, selection and admissions activities.

6 Student Recruitment

6.1 Provision of Information

The University is committed to the provision of timely, accurate and appropriate pre-entry information and support to prospective students. Our recruitment and admissions activities are informed by a commitment to the provision of impartial advice and guidance and support for applicants to enable them to make informed decisions about the Springfield Research University as a study destination.

Information provision is guided by the following principles:

Accuracy: The University is committed to providing accurate and detailed information on the nature of our courses, their structure, duration, modes of assessment, associated fees or additional costs. This information is maintained by recruitment and admissions staff working within Academic Schools and Divisions to ensure that information remains current and is accurate at point of enrolment.

Transparency: Information about our courses and the student experience more broadly is communicated through multiple channels including: University and academic School or Division websites, undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses, course brochures, digital communications, open days, post-application visits days and through correspondence with front-line recruitment and admission staff. To ensure transparency and consistency, the University maintains individual course information profiles accessible in multiple locations on the University website. The information includes: entry requirements, course specific selection and assessment criteria and processes, course structure, teaching and learning, coursework and assessment, fees, funding, attendance

requirements, professional accreditation and employability outcomes.

Timeliness: The University seeks to provide appropriate information at each stage of the applicant journey, from early interactions with pre-16 learners to targeted communication with offer holders.

We make every effort to ensure that the information we provide is accurate when it is published. Printed materials such as the prospectus and subject-specific literature can be prepared as much as 18 months before a course begins. Therefore, applicants should refer to the University website for the most up-to-date information about course content, selection criteria, University processes and financial matters. The University has safeguards in place to ensure any course changes made post-offer are reasonable, in the best interests of students and brought to the attention of students at the earliest opportunity. In such circumstances applicants will be given the option to transfer to an alternative programme or to withdraw their application.

6.2 Commitment to Professional Standards in Recruitment

The University provides a professional service to applicants and prospective students, delivered by expert representatives. Our recruitment practitioners, drawn from across the professional support services and academic community, are committed to:

- ⊙ Maintaining high professional standards and a commitment to the provision of impartial advice and guidance and fair admissions.
- ⊙ Keeping abreast of SADC and international Higher Education trends and developments.
- ⊙ Maintaining integrity in their interactions with prospective students and avoiding offering personal views or opinions on other SADC HEIs.
- ⊙ Developing knowledge of sources of information and advice about progression to higher education.
- ⊙ Developing promotional materials that provide a balanced and accurate account of the Springfield student experience.
- ⊙ Providing support only for events that provide free and impartial advice to prospective students.

All recruitment and admissions staff undertake training and development to ensure their knowledge of recruitment, selection and admissions practice, policy and procedure remains current. Information and training is disseminated through recruitment and admissions networks, coordinated by the DSE and attended by staff working within Academic Schools and Divisions. Bespoke training and information sessions are delivered on key topics and in response to national/international legislative or procedural changes. Additionally, staff members representing the University at SADC undergraduate recruitment events are part of a Schools and Colleges Liaison Team who receive information, training and shadowing opportunities to support them in this role. Also, those staff members who undertake international recruitment work are provided with good practice guidelines and information regarding general entry criteria appropriate to the markets to be visited, key promotional messages and basic immigration criteria where required.

6.3 Use of Third Parties and Educational Advisers

The University works with a relatively small number of educational advisors worldwide. All Springfield education advisors are contracted on a three-year renewable basis. All new partners are selected on the basis of a full and robust recruitment process.

All agents and advisers are monitored on an ongoing basis both in the SADC and overseas.

University staff carry out regular training during overseas visits and via occasional familiarisation visits to the University. The International Office hosts a training and familiarisation conference at the University, every two years.

7 Assessment of Applications

7.1 Fair Admissions

The University is committed to delivering a fair admissions system that admits students of outstanding achievement and potential, irrespective of their background. In so doing, we are committed to the 5 key principles of Fair Admissions: transparency, minimising barriers to entry, selecting for merit, potential and diversity, professionalism and using assessment methods that are reliable and valid.

7.2 Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against academic and non-academic selection criteria specific to the course of study for which an application has been made. Applicants are advised to check information on course specific entry requirements which are published on the University website at www.springfield.university.

The University receives many excellent applications every year. Many of our courses receive several applications for every available place, so regrettably we cannot offer places to all applicants who have the minimum entry qualifications that we require.

All applicants for a course are assessed against the same entry criteria. Where places are limited, we offer places to those eligible applicants who best meet our selection criteria, and whom admissions staff judge to have most potential to benefit from their chosen course and to contribute to the academic School or Division and the University.

Methods of assessing applications vary between courses but may include: prior and predicted academic achievement, references, personal or supporting statements, interview, aptitude tests, and research proposals.

Certain courses operate a staged admissions process to manage the competition for places where there is very high demand. These courses have multiple deadlines throughout the year and preference is given to students with grades above our minimum entry requirements. In certain circumstances, the minimum entry criteria may vary between stages, for example if demand exceeds expectations. The date which an application is submitted may therefore have an impact on the outcome. All courses operating staged admissions advertise this in the *Application and Selection* section of the individual course profile on the University website along with the associated deadlines and further information regarding the process.

Our applicants come from diverse educational, professional and personal backgrounds. We recognise that occasionally a course's standard procedure for assessing applications may not provide the admissions staff with an accurate understanding of an applicant's suitability. In such cases we may ask applicants to provide us with alternative evidence to support their applications or adjust our standard admissions requirements. The admissions staff from the School will contact applicants directly where additional information is required.

8 Entry Qualifications

8.1 Entry Qualifications for Admission

The University welcomes applications from students achieving excellence in a wide range of qualifications. The admissions staff for each course are responsible for determining the qualifications and/or subjects that are appropriate for admission. Strategic oversight of qualifications and SADC equivalency is undertaken by the Admissions Qualifications Group. This group has responsibility for SADC, Asia, EU and international academic qualifications for entry to undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses.

The general minimum institutional entry requirements are:

- ⊙ Applicants for all courses must normally demonstrate a broad general education including, acceptable levels of literacy and numeracy, equivalent to at least grade C/grade 4 GCSE in English Language and Mathematics.
- ⊙ Applicants for taught postgraduate courses must normally possess or expect a relevant undergraduate degree at a minimum level of 2.2 (Lower second class) Honours, or equivalent alternative qualifications or experience.
- ⊙ Applicants for research degrees must normally possess or expect a relevant undergraduate degree at a minimum level of 2.1 (Upper second class) Honours, or equivalent alternative qualifications or experience.

Individual course entry requirements may be higher than these, the detail is provided in the course profiles.

8.2 Applicants with abroad qualifications

The University welcomes students from all over the world and we invite applications from students whose previous education has not included SADC qualifications. Applications from international applicants will be assessed against the standard entry criteria and applicants should refer to the course specific requirements. We have experience in considering a wide range of international qualifications, and our International Office offers advice and guidance for applicants who may wish to discuss whether their qualifications will meet our criteria.

8.3 Applicants who are returning to education

The University considers applications from applicants returning to education after employment or other experience. These applications will be assessed against the standard entry criteria of the course to which an application was made. However, we recognise that standard selection measures and procedures may not enable all applicants to demonstrate fully their suitability for the chosen course. Where appropriate, School's admissions staff will seek and consider alternative evidence in order to give all applicants equivalent consideration. Where this alternative evidence is deemed to meet entry criteria fully, an applicant may not be required to meet the standard academic entry requirements.

8.4 English Language Requirements

Our teaching, assessment and student support are delivered in English. Applicants must therefore demonstrate proficiency in the written and spoken use of the English language

to the general standard required by the University, and in the specific entry requirements of the course they are applying for. We must also make sure that international applicants, who will need a Tier 4 visa to study with us, meet Visas and Immigration's English language requirements.

The minimum acceptable level of proficiency for admission to most courses is GCSE English Language (grade C/grade 4 or above) or an International English Language Testing (IELTS) average score of 6.0 with a minimum score of 5.5 in each component. For more linguistically demanding courses (such as Law, Management, Medicine and Postgraduate research courses), requirements are higher.

The English Language Qualification Group provides academic scrutiny of English language qualifications that are acceptable for admission including determining those that can be included on the vouch list.

9 Duty to Disclose Criminal Convictions

The Springfield Research University is committed to providing equal opportunities for applicants irrespective of their personal circumstances or background and as such does not wish to unnecessarily preclude those with a criminal conviction from joining a course of study. However, the University has a duty to ensure the safety of its student and staff community, and that of other people with whom students interact as part of their course of study. The application process requires applicants to disclose relevant unspent criminal convictions.

For courses where studies necessitate interaction with children and/or vulnerable adults, applicants must declare all criminal convictions. For these courses, the University requires applicants to pass a criminal records check carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or similar police check in their home country. Applicants will be advised if these or any other conditions apply in the recruitment information relating to the course.

Where a criminal record check is not a mandatory requirement, applicants are required to declare any relevant unspent convictions after an offer has been accepted (and on a continuing basis).

10 Medical Fitness Assessment

We require applicants for certain vocational or professional courses and research programmes to demonstrate medical fitness to practise, in order to comply with the requirements of relevant professional bodies. Applicants will be advised if these or any other conditions apply in the recruitment information relating to the course.

11 Applicants seeking to enter with Accreditation of Prior Learning

Applicants may be considered through the accreditation of prior learning, which may be certificated or experiential. The admissions staff for the relevant course are responsible for determining the grounds on which accreditation is acceptable. Credit is allocated for evidence of achieving appropriate and assessed learning outcomes, rather than for experience itself. APL credit will normally be accepted within a maximum of five years from the date it was awarded. APEL experience will normally be accepted within a maximum of five years from the date of the most recent activity. Applicants are strongly advised to discuss their circumstances with the relevant academic School or Division admissions staff before submitting an application.

12 Applicants with a Disability and/or Additional Support Needs

The University welcomes applications from people with a disability, medical condition or who may require additional support needs.

Applicants are encouraged to disclose this information at the point of application either via their application form or the University's online application form. This will not affect an applicant's chances of receiving an offer but will enable our Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) to make contact directly and provide support and advice. Applicants who may not wish to disclose details this way, or those wanting to make contact pre-application, may contact DASS directly.

Such applicants will be considered against the same criteria for entry as all other candidates as outlined in sections 7 and 8 of this policy (Assessment of Applications and Entry Qualifications respectively).

Applicants who have disclosed this information and subsequently receive an offer will be contacted by DASS who will discuss any adjustments or support needs. In the unlikely event that the University cannot reasonably make the necessary adjustments required, we will discuss this with the applicant and provide support in exploring different options available.

13 Applicants with Special Circumstances

Applicants with special circumstances that have affected previous study or are likely to affect academic performance in current studies should provide this information at the point of application. If these circumstances are encountered after the submission of an application, applicants should inform the admissions staff in the academic School or Division to which they applied as soon as possible. Special circumstances cannot be considered after an adverse decision has been made where prior notification could have been made. It would generally be expected that applicants will have reported any special circumstances to their previous/current institution or examining body so that appropriate adjustments can be made when results are awarded. Where special circumstances have already been taken into account, for example by the relevant examination board, we will not be able to make further allowances.

14 Applicants Seeking Deferred Entry

Applications for deferred entry are assessed against the same entry requirements and considered equally to other applications up to the point of confirmation. Deferred entry where possible is normally granted for one year only and two years at the maximum, at the discretion of admissions staff. Applicants whose first language is not English and who are required to present English Language qualifications should ensure that the test results will be valid on the date of registration.

15 Applicants Wishing to Reapply

Applicants who are unsuccessful may apply again in a subsequent year. Applications will be considered against the standard course entry criteria for that year of entry. The new application should demonstrate an improvement from the previous application.

Students who have previously been exited from a programme on academic grounds will not normally be made any further offers on the same programme of study, unless very exceptional circumstances apply. Applicants would be expected to identify in their application that they had previously been exited on academic grounds and provide information and/or evidence to the relevant admissions team accounting for issues which had previously impacted on academic attainment. Such cases would be

considered at the discretion of the Academic School.

We may draw upon all information from previous applications or any previous registrations at the University as a student when assessing suitability for a course.

16 Information on the Admissions Process

16.1 Start of Admissions Cycle

The admissions cycle at the Springfield Research University will usually formally start on the second Monday of October.

16.2 Closing Dates

All applications for undergraduate courses starting in September should be received by Admissions by the deadlines of 15 October of the previous year for Medicine and Dentistry and 15 January for all other courses (subject to the change of deadlines by Admissions). Applications made before the closing date will be considered equally against the stated selection criteria and in the context of the number of available places. The University will consider late applications only for courses where places are still available. For many courses, places may not be available after the deadline.

Postgraduate courses will be closed once all offers have been made and so applicants are advised to apply as early as possible. Many postgraduate taught courses or research degrees do not have a formal closing date for application however, there may be deadlines that apply to funding opportunities. Some postgraduate taught courses operate a staged admissions process with selection deadlines throughout the year. Where a closing date or staged admissions applies it will be published in the University's recruitment literature or other relevant course information as well as on the University's website.

16.3 Admissions Process

16.3.1 Initial Application

Applications are assessed and the places offered on the basis of the academic and professional judgement of suitably qualified staff. Applicants will normally receive a response within five to ten working days of the receipt of a completed application. This response may be:

- A decision on the application.
- Information regarding the next stage in the admissions process (e.g. invitation to attend an interview), or
- An explanation of the admissions process and the likely time-scale of what will happen next.

16.3.2 The Making of Offers

All applicants who are offered a place to study at the University will receive an offer letter detailing the terms and conditions of the offer. This will include details of any individual requirements that need to be fulfilled before an applicant can be admitted to the University. Offer letters will be sent out either by post or as by email along with a copy of the Student Terms and Conditions.

Where an offer is conditional upon attaining a specified level of academic achievement this offer will be tailored to suit the qualifications that the applicant is undertaking. Please note that we do not make offers using Admissions tariff points.

Conditional offer holders are responsible for providing evidence that they have met the terms and conditions of their offer. This evidence could include for example, certificates and degree transcripts once these become available or the fulfilment of other requirements such as medical fitness.

17 Student Visa

The University is licensed with the Home Office as a Student Sponsor. Where a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) is required, the University will aim to provide this in good time for the visa application but in doing so relies on the applicant taking responsibility for:

- making an early application for admission including complete details of all previous study and periods of study in the country
- responding fully and in good time to accept the offer
- responding fully to requests for any further information, such as passport details and
- providing a current email address to which the CAS will be issued.

In order to comply with the relevant Kingdom of Eswatini legislation and immigration regulations, the University will notify the immigration authorities, where relevant, of any non-arrival, or late arrival, of an applicant and of any subsequent changes to a student's registration status. The University reserves the right to refuse admission should an applicant be found not to be in a position to meet all visa requirements for the anticipated full duration of his/her programme of study.

All applicants requiring a visa to study in the Kingdom of Eswatini must not currently be, nor have ever previously been, in the Kingdom of Eswatini for any purpose without valid immigration permissions. If, either during the process of admitting a student or subsequent to that student enrolling upon their programme of study, the University is informed that the applicant/student is (or has previously been) in the Kingdom of Eswatini without such valid permissions, it may be required to inform the immigration authorities and/or withdraw the offer of a place and/or withdraw its sponsorship of the individual's visa.

The University may need to review this policy in light of changes to Home Office Immigration policy in order to remain compliant with Sponsor duties. This may result in changes to matters such as the evidence required for English language proficiency at short notice. Where changes are necessary due to Home Office changes the University will endeavour to contact all applicants holding an offer and on whom the change will impact, within 6 weeks.

18 Interaction between the University and Applicants

The University will communicate regularly with offer holders providing relevant information throughout the process with information such as accommodation, immigration requirements, start of year registration processes and welcome week events.

18.1 Applicant Behaviour

The Springfield Research University has a diverse population and expects all interaction between applicants, representatives of applicants, students and staff to be conducted with courtesy and respect. We do not tolerate inappropriate behaviour towards members of our community and also expect applicants to apply the same standards of conduct online as they are expected to apply offline.

Examples of inappropriate behaviour include, but are not limited to, hostile, aggressive or offensive behaviour or language, excessive levels of contact or the act of offering a bribe or financial inducement. Behaviour and language can be deemed inappropriate whether expressed verbally or in writing, including via social media. Inappropriate behaviour will be viewed seriously and may prejudice the further consideration of an application, appeal or complaint. Applicants will usually be warned by the University when their conduct is such that action is being considered. In exceptional cases, where the behaviour or language is particularly inappropriate, threatening or offensive, then no warning need be given before action is taken. Such action may include the rejection of an application, withdrawal of an offer and/or discontinuation of correspondence with the applicant or their representative.

18.2 Fraud, Omission and Plagiarism

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

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

19 Policy relating to Applications for Undergraduate Courses

19.1 Undergraduate Admissions Framework

We have developed an admissions framework to support the principles of fair and transparent admissions. The framework outlines the different stages in the selection process and demonstrates how a final decision is formed on the basis of an overall consideration of each application.

19.2 Use of Contextual Data

In order to build up a full and rounded view of applicant achievement and potential, the University uses contextual information to supplement undergraduate applications. This applies to local applicants under the age of 21 only. Publicly available datasets from government and other agencies are used and disseminated to our Academic Schools and Divisions. This is simply additional information provided to admissions decision makers alongside applicants' admissions forms. This information will be used to recommend certain applications for further consideration by admissions tutors; no decisions will be made on the basis of this information alone. Where applicants meet both geo-demographic and educational indicators or have been in care for more than three months they may qualify for a differential offer, subject to specific criteria. Differential offers may be revoked if it subsequently comes to light that the information provided as part of the application is incorrect meaning that an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria.

19.3 Outreach and Support Work and Additional Access Routes

The Springfield Research University is committed to identifying and attracting outstanding students based on their educational potential and merit, nationally and internationally, irrespective of background.

We work closely with primary and secondary learners to expand opportunity for progression into higher education generally. This work is particularly important within our local communities in SADC and the whole Africa, where progression rates into higher education still fall significantly below the national average.

19.4 Minors

Students who have not reached the age of 18 on 1st of September at the year of entry are legally considered to be 'minors' (i.e. not yet adults) under English law. This means that the University has an *enhanced duty of care* to all students under the age of 18. We will carry out a full risk assessment for all applicants who will be under the age of 17 on 1st of September at the point of entry; the academic School or Division may carry out the risk assessment at their discretion for applicants who are 17 but under 18 on 1st of September at the year of entry, for example where the content of the proposed programme of study merits it.

19.5 Care Leavers

The University has developed a protocol to identify and support applicants from care backgrounds. Students identifying themselves as having spent time in local authority care through their admissions application are flagged as part of our contextual data processes.

19.6 Confirmation

The University will confirm whether an applicant has met their offer upon receipt of results. All applicants meeting the conditions of their offer will have their place confirmed. Applicants with contextual data flags and special circumstances declared before results are published may be given additional consideration if they are found to have narrowly missed the conditions of their offer.

Applicants who have missed the conditions of their offer may be considered for alternative courses where the entry requirements are lower, for example a foundation year course, where applicable, may be offered. Applicants will be informed of this and given opportunity to consider the offer. Applicants are under no obligation to accept the alternative course.

19.7 Clearing Applications

The University will advertise any vacancies that are available after the close of the main admission cycle on University websites. A telephone hotline service will usually be available for enquirers. Suitably qualified applicants will be considered against the published entry criteria. As A level results are released in mid-January, please note that where additional requirements may need to be completed prior to admission, it may not be possible to start immediately. For example, there may be insufficient time to investigate an applicant who declares a criminal conviction.

20 Policy relating to Applications for Postgraduate Courses

20.1 Applications

The term 'application' refers to a fully completed and submitted application including supporting documentation (e.g. transcripts, references, additional statements of purpose) where required. Speculative communications are not considered to be formal applications. Applications for postgraduate courses are made via the University's online application process.

Some courses may charge a fee for applications, where this applies the fee will be displayed on the

course profile. In these instances, decisions will not be confirmed until the applicable fees have been paid. Applicants may apply for multiple courses and may receive offers on multiple courses. Where an applicant has applied for multiple courses within the same academic School or Division the School/Division reserves the right to offer a place for only one of the courses.

20.2 Supervision for Research Programmes

The University will admit students only where we reasonably expect to be able to provide appropriate specialist supervision and necessary resources for the specified duration of the programme.

20.3 Interviews for Postgraduate Research Courses

Before an offer of a place is made, you will be invited to participate in an interview. As a face-to-face interview is often impractical, the interview may take different forms such as via telephone, Skype or other software package. The panel will include as a minimum two academic members of staff, one of whom who is the potential supervisor and another one who is independent to the research project.

21 Data Protection and Disclosure of Personal Information

21.1 University use of Prospective Enquirer Data

The University collects data on prospective enquirers who request prospectus information or other course literature, attend open days or other recruitment events. This data is collected for the specific purpose of providing information to prospective applicants and parents.

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

21.2 University use of Applicant Data

The University of Springfield needs to collect, maintain and use personal data relating to its applicants to allow us to process applications for study, register students, to administer courses and to provide facilities for students.

Data collected during the admissions and registration processes will be used for the purposes of maintaining student records, managing processes in relation to academic progress, providing personal and academic advice and support, managing accommodation services and providing access to the Library and sports facilities and the facilities in The Springfield Research University's Students' Union.

The University also needs to collect and process more sensitive personal data (special category personal data, for example, data concerning your racial/ethnic origins, health and wellbeing and sexuality) to undertake equal opportunity monitoring, and provide access to some courses and support for students where appropriate. We are also legally required to collect and process data on past criminal convictions for access to some courses. This data will only be shared between staff who have a legitimate need to see it.

We will not share your data with third parties unless we have an appropriate consent from you, are under a statutory or regulatory obligation to do, (the Student Loans Company Ltd, the Skills Funding Agency, local authorities or police) or are otherwise permitted to do so under the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act.

Anonymised and aggregated applicant data are analysed by the University, for purposes including institutional and statutory monitoring, market research, planning, and teaching and learning, in order to ensure that our processes are fair and effective and our courses best reflect applicant need.

22 Transition from Applicant to Student

22.1 Registration

While applicants are able to apply to a number of courses at the University, they are only able to register on one full-time course in any one year. Applicants aiming to register on two part-time courses or programmes should discuss this as soon as possible with the course admissions staff.

For joint courses, one will be a lead institution who will be responsible for admissions. Students will be required to register at both institutions in order to gain access to facilities for their course.

22.2 Intellectual Property

The University regards the creation of Intellectual Property (IP) as one of its major objectives and has Regulations regarding new inventions and IP arising from students whilst studying at the University.

23 Fee Status and Assessment

The University charges different levels of tuition fees depending on whether a student is classified as Home or International.

Upon receipt of an application to study at the University, a set of rules will be applied to assess whether the applicant meets the criteria to be classed as a Home or International student. Where the information provided does not allow us to make a decision the applicant will be informed of this and asked to complete the tuition fee assessment process and to provide additional documents.

Funding constraints may determine the eligibility of an applicant to be considered for a particular course. Fees for home undergraduate courses are subject to the provision of our current Access Agreement, as approved by The Office of Fair Access.

24 Tuition Fees and Funding

There is an expectation that students will have sufficient funds to pay tuition fees and living expenses during their period of study, and applicants are asked to give details of their funding arrangements at the point of application.

Applicants are bound by the University's Ordinances and Regulations on the payment of fees and the consequences of non-payment (see Ordinance XVI; General Regulation XII). Sponsored students should be aware that should their sponsor fail to pay the required fees, the applicant will become responsible for payment.

For some courses a non-refundable deposit is required at the point at which the offer of a place is firmly accepted. In these cases, the amount paid will be deducted from the total tuition fee due at the start of the academic programme.

25 Changes to or Discontinuation of Courses

The content, delivery and assessment of courses are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are up to date, relevant, reflect current research and practice and are consistent with the requirements of regulatory bodies.

The University would only look to make changes to courses (for example, to their content, structure or assessment) or discontinue a course (or certain elements of a course) during the admissions cycle in exceptional circumstances (such as for the reasons outlined above or where such changes are otherwise operationally necessary), and where such changes are objectively necessary.

Where this is the case then:

- ⊙ Offer holders will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity and provided with advice and support regarding the impact of the changes and the options available to them.
- ⊙ The University will take all reasonable steps to minimise any disruption caused to the offer holder by the changes.
- ⊙ Where appropriate, offer holders may be given help with securing an offer of a suitable alternative course internally or at another institution.

26 Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

We aim to consider all applications fairly and effectively against the published entry requirements and in line with our procedures. We provide feedback on request to applicants whose application has been unsuccessful to enable them to reflect on their progress through the application process. Feedback is usually given in writing, at the discretion of the course admissions staff. To request feedback, applicants should contact the admissions staff for their chosen course.

If applicants or prospective students are dissatisfied with the outcome or treatment of their application, the concerns should be raised firstly with the Admissions staff for the course for which the application was made. Where the concerns remain, applicants are advised to use the Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants which has been established to safeguard the interests of prospective students.

27 Monitoring and Review

This policy and related recruitment and admissions procedures and practices across the University are overseen by the Student Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Management Group. Activities or developments that have implications for the policy are considered at each meeting.