**Edinburgh Napier University**

**Contextual Admissions Policy**

1. **Background**

Edinburgh Napier University is committed to admitting students who have the potential to succeed and benefit from our programmes of study. We believe that a diverse student body makes for a more interesting and dynamic learning environment and brings benefits to our student population as a whole. However, we also recognise that student learner journeys differ considerably, as does the level of support, advice and guidance available to students. Implementation of a contextual admissions policy aims to take account of these differences in backgrounds, thereby acknowledging the context in which a student has achieved his/her academic grades.

Whilst academic grades remain the primary tool in assessing academic ability, there is increasing evidence across the sector[[1]](#footnote-1) that Universities should consider more than academic achievement alone when making admissions decisions.

The University already gives additional consideration to applicants who apply via the Lothian Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS), the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP), or those who have spent time in Care or is a young carer. The implementation of a contextual admissions policy represents further development of the University’s commitment to widening access.

1. **Contextual Factors**

**2.1 Offer Making**

In addition to considering an applicant’s academic achievement, the University will consider contextual data when making admissions decisions. Where possible, we will make an offer of admission, or offer an interview, audition or portfolio review, to Scottish-domiciled students[[2]](#footnote-2) who have one or more of the following contextual identifiers

1. Applicants who have been in Care
2. Applicants who are Young carers - Young adult carers are young people aged 16–25 who care, unpaid, for a family member or friend with an illness or disability, mental health condition or an addiction.
3. Applicants who have been identified as LEAPS eligible
4. Applicants applying via a SWAP route
5. Applicants who have attended a school which has a low number of students progressing to Higher Education (SHEP Schools[[3]](#footnote-3))
6. Applicants who have Government recognised refugee or asylum status
7. Applicants who live in an area of high deprivation (MD20[[4]](#footnote-4))

In line with our current procedures we will continue to review applications on an individual basis with reference to the academic grades (achieved and predicted), personal statement and academic reference. Applicants are required to demonstrate via their UCAS application, their interest in and commitment to, their chosen subject of study. This is particularly important for those subject areas which involve an interview, audition or portfolio review as part of the admissions process.

We will also continue to consider, individually, applicants who have a declared disability and those who have had to deal with adverse personal circumstances[[5]](#footnote-5) which have had an impact on academic progression. Please refer to the University Admissions Policy and the Policy for Applicants with Declared Disabilities for further information.

**2.2 Adjusted Offers**

Where an offer of admission is able to be made to contextual applicants, these offers will be set at an ‘adjusted ‘ level for year 1 entry.

Adjusted offer grade requirements are listed within the entry requirements section of the course information pages on our website. Where the entry requirements include a required subject, this subject must still be achieved at the minimum requirement set out in our published entry requirements.

For contextual offer holders we will ‘double count’ Highers and Advanced Highers when calculating a student’s achievement. A student **must** however by the point of entry have achieved passes in a minimum of three different subjects to qualify for entry.

Passes for the purposes of admission are Higher Grade C or Advanced Higher Grade D or better.

**2.3 Confirmation of Results**

On confirmation of results from applicants, final admissions decisions will be made on an individual basis, taking into consideration grades achieved, alongside any contextual factors.

**2.4 Operation of Contextual Admissions**

Admissions decision making continues to be carried out on an individual basis with reference to the applicant’s achievements. The operation of a contextual admissions process does not change this – applicants are still expected to demonstrate an aptitude for, and interest in their chosen subject area.

1. **Review and Monitoring**

It is neither in the University or applicant interest to admit students who may struggle to complete their degree studies. As a result, the University will closely monitor those students who have been admitted on the basis of contextual factors. This tracking data will be used to inform and where appropriate to guide any revisions to this policy.

1. **Support for Applicants**

As is currently the case, the University will continue to offer a wide-range of student support services, such as student mentoring and academic skills workshops, to help ease the transition to University study. Full details can be obtained by emailing Student Learning.

**5.0 Additional Information**

For further information relating to admission to the University please refer to the University’s Admissions Policy and to the University’s Curriculum for Excellence Statement (SQA candidates).

1. Supporting Professionalism in Admissions ‘Contextualised Admissions : Examining the Evidence’ July 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Currently living in Scotland [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The SFC funded Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP), has identified 80 schools as having a low number of students progressing to Higher Education (defined as a less than 22% average progression rate to HE, based on 5-year average). The list of SHEP schools is updated annually and LEAPS Group 1 Schools are included in this list [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. As defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, applicants who have a home postcode in any of the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland (MD20) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For example, where an applicant has suffered a bereavement, individual ill health, ill health of a close family member or where there has been serious disruption to their education. Circumstances are considered on an individual basis. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)