



15a Admissions Policy



Author: Zoe Dunn

Last review: 4th March 2021

Next review: April 2022

Approved by: Philip Miller

Document: 15a

Introduction

Choosing the right school for your child is a very important decision. We do all that we can to help families to make the right choice.

Whilst University College School is an academically selective school, we are keen to invite and encourage applications from pupils of all backgrounds. In accordance with the aims of our founders, UCS is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background. Indeed, our aim is to encourage applications from candidates with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and helps to prepare pupils for their lives beyond School. The school has no religious affiliation and was founded on the principle that the opportunity of an academically fulfilling education should be available to all who can benefit from it.

Open Evenings & School Visits

UCS Pre-Prep strongly encourages personal visits which include a School Tour during the School day. The Headmistress and staff are pleased to welcome families to visit the school before deciding whether or not to register their children for admission. Such visits should always be booked in advance through the School Office. We also encourage visits to the other schools in the Foundation to see the wider facilities offered. Our School Tours are open to all prospective parents but we prefer that parents are not accompanied by their children on these visits due to space restrictions.

Further information and news about the School, including the prospectus, can be found on our website (accessed through www.ucs.org.uk).

Application to UCS Pre-Prep

The main entry point to the School is at Reception (aged 4+). Each year the school admits up to 36 children into the Reception year.

Vacancies may occasionally arise at other ages. The School Office provides guidance for the application and assessment process applicable for these '*ad hoc*' admissions on a case-by-case basis.

Our aim is to manage the process in such a way as to make applications as straightforward as possible. The process of application always requires the completion of an online Application Form, which must be acknowledged by means of marking a check box accordingly by both parents or legal guardian(s) where applicable. Applications will close in September 2021. There is a standard, non-refundable registration fee, to cover the costs of administration and assessment. Please see the school's website <http://www.ucs.org.uk/Pre-Prep>.

You can register your child at any time after they are born but applications close the year preceding the intended start in September i.e. if your child is due to start Reception in September 2021 then the applications close at the end of September 2021

Once the application and fee have been received the applicant is registered and receives a confirmation email to this effect. The applicant will then be entered for the relevant assessment process and the School will contact you in advance of the assessment date with further details.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

We do not discriminate in any way regarding entry. We welcome pupils with special educational needs, providing that our staff (particularly our medical staff and/ or Enhanced Learning Department) can offer them the support that they require, both during the application process and once the pupil is admitted to the School. Such information will never adversely prejudice an application.

We welcome pupils with physical disabilities, conscious that there are some areas in our buildings to which access may be difficult in certain cases. If we determine that the nature of the physical disability may create difficulties in terms of accessing our buildings for the purposes of pursuing their application, i.e. to attend the assessment we will contact parents (and medical advisers if required) to discuss how we can ensure that we accommodate the prospective pupil.

We will discuss thoroughly with parents and their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if he in due course becomes a pupil at the School. These adjustments will be subject to the School's accessibility policy (SENDA) and usual routines and budget constraints.

Access Arrangements

UCS will accommodate the needs of candidates who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, it can cater.

Applicants who are not UK/ EU citizens

In the application form, applicants are required to indicate whether they are UK or EU citizens, and if not, to indicate the basis upon which they have residency in the United Kingdom. In the event that an offer of a place is eventually made, the School must be provided with the appropriate documentation which evidences the right of residency and the right to study.

Any applicant who intends to study at UCS under a Tier 4 licence must advise the School immediately. If we have no Tier 4 licence available, regrettably we will not be able to accept the application. If a Tier 4 licence is available but the number of applications for places exceeds availability, candidates may be invited to sit the appropriate assessment tests and to attend an interview. The Headmaster will then decide which, if any, of the applicants is entitled to a place.

Any applicant to whom we do not offer a place solely as a result of a Tier 4 licence being unavailable is entitled to a full refund of the registration fee.

Any costs incurred by the School in handling a successful application for a place under a Tier 4 licence are payable by the applicant.

Please refer to the appendix, 'Protocol for checking passports and visas' which explains how the school acts on its responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who are enrolled are entitled to live and study in the UK.

The Selection Procedures for Places at UCS Pre-Prep

When registrations for Reception admission have closed, all applicants will be invited to attend an assessment. Although there will be a limited number of assessments, every effort will be made to ensure that each child is able to attend. If you are unable to attend any of the assessments it will be difficult for the School to accurately assess your child's suitability. Assessments will be held in the January of the year of proposed entry.

UCS Pre-Prep has a selective admissions procedure, and the school needs to be confident that a child will be able to academically engage with the pace of the curriculum and be socially and emotionally able to compete for 7+ places in Year 2. UCS is an academically selective School. Thus, admissions decisions will be based upon the judgement of assessors in respect of a candidate's ability to make the most of the diverse opportunities on offer at UCS and to contribute positively to the life of the School and to the experience of other pupils.

Assessments offer an opportunity for children to meet with UCS Pre-Prep staff and to learn more about the school, and for the children to interact with one another, under the supervision of the staff, in a slightly more formal setting within the school environment.

The key dates for all aspects of our assessment process for the current year are published on our website.

No specific preparation for the assessment is required. All candidates start on an equal footing, with identical opportunities.

Admission decisions are based upon a number of criteria:

- i. In the view of the staff, how ready the child will be for full-time education and the curriculum offered at the Pre-Prep when they join the school. This judgement will be based on the impression formed at the assessment and supporting documents such as a reference from a current Nursery or childminder (if applicable) and parental questionnaires.
- ii. Whether the applicant has a sibling at UCS Pre-Prep. Siblings will also have to meet the criteria noted above.
- iii. For those candidates invited to the second round of assessments we will seek a report from the candidate's current Nursery and take full account of it in balancing all the available information before a decision is reached.

Sibling Policy

Whilst we are very happy to welcome siblings at UCS, admission is not automatic. Siblings must go through the same process as all other applicants at their chosen point of entry. Siblings will not be admitted if we believe that they are unlikely to thrive within the UCS environment or if we think that their admission in preference to another candidate would be unfair.

Offers of Places at UCS Pre-Prep

Offers for Reception admission will be made at the end of January in the year of proposed entry. Families will normally be given up to two weeks in which to respond to an offer (it will be possible to visit the School again during this period). The offer period cannot be extended.

Acceptance of any place at UCS requires the following;

- The payment of a non-refundable financial deposit, in the form of advance payment of a portion of the first term's fees (which are then adjusted accordingly).
- The completion, signing and return of the School's Admission Agreement by both parents (and guardians) as named on the original application. A separate copy of the Terms and Conditions of this Agreement will be provided for retention by the family. Occasional changes may be made to these Terms and Conditions; all such changes will be made known to parents.
- The completion, signing and return of all compulsory joining documents, including a copy of the prospective pupil's passport and any applicable visas. The School reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if the citizenship/ residency information provided in the original application cannot be supported by suitable evidence.

Acceptance of an offer will indicate agreement to any conditions attached to it, including those relating to academic performance in the interim.

Parents are reminded of the following points:

- i. Fees are payable termly and are due on the first day of each term. If fees in respect of a pupil are not received, then the School reserves the right to exclude the pupil from school until payment is received;
- ii. Parents are encouraged to pay school fees by monthly direct debit;
- iii. A full term's notice is required of parents' intention to withdraw a pupil from the School. In the absence of such notice, a term's fees will be charged;
- iv. Parents undertake to support the ethos and principles upon which the School is run. In particular, parents must ensure that their child attends school daily and punctually (unless they are ill) and that their child follows the school code of conduct and behaviour policy.

Waiting List

Families whose application is unsuccessful at this point will be invited to add their child's name to the Occasional Places Waiting List, which will be ranked according to the criteria used at the assessment (i – iii on page 3). If, by the published deadline for acceptances, vacancies still exist, they will be filled from this waiting list.

Admission in Other Year Groups

The standard entry point for UCS Pre-Prep is 4+ admissions to Reception. However, occasional vacancies in other years do sometimes occur. In order to be considered for such occasional places,

the school must already hold a Registration Form for the child concerned. If there has already been an application for admission to Reception, then there will be no need to complete a further form. Families who express interest in joining UCS Pre-Prep after Reception admissions are completed should fill in a Registration Form at the earliest opportunity.

When occasional vacancies arise, the parents of children in the appropriate age-group, and for whom the school holds completed Registration Forms, will be contacted and invited to bring their child to the school for assessment. The assessment process will be competitive.

Admission decisions will be based upon the applicant's performance in an assessment process appropriate for the age at which entry is sought. Such assessments will consider both academic and social, behavioural and developmental factors.

As with Reception admissions, offers will be made once the assessment process is completed. Families will normally have two weeks in which to consider any offer. Places are accepted through the completion of the Admission Agreement and the payment of a deposit. Deadlines cannot be extended. The deposit will be retained by the School until the child leaves. Once the Admission Agreement and deposit have been received, the place is confirmed.

Progress Through UCS After Admission

There is an expectation that boys attending UCS Pre-Prep will want to transfer to the Junior Branch of UCS and then on to the Senior School. Transfer to the Junior Branch is not fully automatic and UCS Pre-Prep boys will sit 7+ entry assessments in line with all external candidates; however, they sit the examination at the Pre-Prep and, except in cases where severe academic performance and behavioural concerns have been raised, either prior to 7+ or as a result of 7+, every effort will be made to facilitate UCS Pre-Prep boys' passage onwards into the Foundation if it is felt this is in the best interests of the child.

Disposal of Admissions Data

Admissions Data is held and is disposed of according to the requirements of the School's Disposal of Records Schedule.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headmistress, advised by the Director of Admissions, is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of this policy and will report to the governing body on its success by indicating the numbers of pupils recruited on a termly basis.

Links to other Policies

This policy has links to the Equal Opportunities, Curriculum, SEND and EAL and SENDA Policies.

Appendix; Protocol for Checking Pupils' right to study in the UK

Overall responsibility for ensuring pupils' right to live and study in the UK is responsibility of the Admissions Department (Senior School) or the Admissions administrators (Pre-Prep and JB) for both prospective and current pupils.

This protocol applies to pupils throughout the UCS Foundation. The families of all pupils who join the school are required in the application process to indicate if they are a UK or EU national.

The family of any pupil who is indicated as not being a UK or EU national is asked later in the admissions process if the child has the right to live and study in the UK, i.e. whether they have a valid visa, and whether it is a dependent's visa or if the child would require Tier 4 sponsorship. For further information about how we handle Tier 4 applications, please see the separate section below.

All candidates who accept an offer of a place here are then required, as part of the joining information provided by families, to supply a photocopy or scanned image of a valid UK/ EU passport or birth certificate. If the right to live and study in the UK is dependent on a visa, we require originals of the child's visa for our inspection; all relevant pages are then copied or scanned and then hard copies placed in the student's file. Families are also required under Section 3 of the Terms and Conditions to inform the school immediately if there is any change in the citizenship of the pupil which affects their right to live and study in the UK. For sake of clarity, this does not include normal renewal of UK or EU passports.

Any prospective pupil whose family fails to provide this information will not be permitted to join the school.

Hard copy images of passports and visas supplied at this time are retained in the pupil files in the Headmaster's Secretary's office in each foundation school. Records are also kept of the expiry date of any applicable visa. Families are required to contact the school and supply an image of the renewed visa as soon as is practical after they have received it. Failure to do so is a breach of our Terms and Conditions and could result in the child being unable to remain a pupil at the school. As a further diligence measure, the Admissions Office (Senior School) or relevant administrative staff (Junior Branch and Pre-Prep) check our records of visa expiry dates on or around 1st May every year to ensure that we have up to date records.

Tier 4 Visas and Sponsorship

There are currently zero pupils in the UCS Foundation who are on Tier 4 visas. The foundation therefore has no active licences.

The normal position of the schools in the foundation is that we do not permit applications which require Tier 4 visa sponsorship.

On occasion when the need for the school to offer Tier 4 sponsorship arises, for example if a current pupil who wishes to remain a pupil for some reason has a change in their citizenship or visa which would otherwise preclude them from doing so, the Headmaster may decide to offer such sponsorship and support the family's application for a Tier 4 visa. In such circumstances the application is handled by the senior school's Admissions Department (even for current pupils), with the advice of the HR Department and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) as appropriate, regardless of whether the pupil is in the Pre-Prep, the Junior Branch or the Senior School.

Failure to secure a Tier 4 visa would result in the child being unable to continue as a pupil at the school. As sponsors of a Tier 4 visa, the school would be jointly responsible with the pupil's family for ensuring the successful renewal of the visa in due course.

P Miller

Director of Admissions