

**Contextualised Admissions Policy**

**Approved by:** *Senate, October 2022*

**Review Date:**  *October 2023*

**Responsibility:** *Admissions and Enquiry Service*

**Policy Statement**

Glasgow Caledonian University is committed to providing a rewarding Higher Education opportunity and experience to applicants with the potential to benefit from, and contribute to the GCU experience, mission and values. The University is committed to increasing opportunities for widening access, social inclusion and providing opportunities to students from disadvantaged backgrounds as measured by the HESA Performance indicators[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Aims:**

Glasgow Caledonian University aims to lead the way in widening access to higher education. As part of the University’s mission to promote the Common Good, we work with schools, children and families in the local community to raise educational aspirations. This policy aims to build on this work and recognise the different student learner journeys. The policy aims to recognise and acknowledge that not all applicants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full academic potential and will take into consideration the context and circumstance in which a student has achieved their academic grades.

The University currently gives consideration to applicants who apply via Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) and applicants who have undertaken the FOCUS West Top-Up programme or Lothians Equal Access Program for Schools (LEAPs). This policy is an extension to this.

This policy will be applied to Scottish domiciled students entering the University at level 1 of a full time undergraduate degree programme and Scottish domiciled Care Experienced applicants entering an undergraduate degree programme at any level with a Higher National (HN) Qualification.

1. **Contextual Offers:**

The Admissions and Enquiry Service will take a variety of contextual factors into consideration in addition to academic achievement and/or the potential for academic achievement when making a decision on applications to a full time undergraduate degree programme.

Any applicant who meets one or more of the contextual factors and is successful in gaining an offer to the University at level 1 will be offered on the Minimum Entry Requirement for the programme. Care Experienced applicants successful in gaining an offer at advanced entry with a Higher National (HN) Qualification may be made an offer on reduced entry criteria.

1. **Contextual Factors:**

The following pieces of contextual information will be used when determining the offer made to an applicant:

* An applicant who has been identified as a Young Carer[[2]](#footnote-2). This data is provided by applicants on their UCAS application within the personal statement and/or reference and verified by the Admissions and Enquiry Service.
* An applicant who has been identified as Care Experienced according to GCU’s definition.[[3]](#footnote-3) Applicants who declare ‘yes’ to the ‘time spent in care’ question on their UCAS application will have their status verified by the Admissions and Enquiry Service.
* An applicant who has been identified as a Refugee or Asylum Seeker. This data is provided by the applicant on the UCAS form and will have their status verified by the Admissions and Enquiry Service.
* An applicant who resides in Quintile 1[[4]](#footnote-4). This data is provided by the applicant on the UCAS application form.
* An applicant who resides in Quintile 2[[5]](#footnote-5), and has attended a GCU School Connect School or the Caledonian Club. This data is provided by the applicant on the UCAS application form.

1. **Review and Monitoring**

While the University is committed to widening access and providing opportunities to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, it is not in the interests of the University or the applicant to admit students who do not have the full potential to succeed. We will therefore monitor students who have been admitted on this basis and monitor the impact of the implementation of the policy. This information will inform any expansion to or revisions of the policy in future.

1. **Support for Applicants**

Applicants admitted on the basis of a contextual offer will have access to the same support services as all other students through the Learning Development Centres in each academic school for academic writing support, advice on study skills and other academic support and guidance. The University’s Student Services offer a range of services for all other support requirements.

**Glossary of Related Codes of Practice/Policy Documents/Regulations:**

[GCU Strategy 2030](https://strategy2030.gcu.ac.uk/)

[GCU: Equality and Diversity](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/commongood/equality)

[GCU: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulationsandpolicies/recognitionofpriorlearningrplatgcu)

[GCU: Complaints Handling Procedure](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/gaq/appealscomplaintsstudentconductdiscipline/complaints/)

[GCU: Student Terms and Conditions](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/regulations/gcustudenttermsandconditions/)

[GCU: Code of Student Conduct](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/supportservices/governance/complaintsstudentconduct)

[GCU: College Connect](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/collegeconnect/)

[Common Good Curriculum](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/commongood/commongoodcurriculum)

[Discover Uni](https://discoveruni.gov.uk/course-finder/results/)

[Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code)

[Schwartz Report - Fair Admissions to Higher Education](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5284/1/finalreport.pdf)

[Scottish Qualifications Framework](http://www.scqf.org.uk/)

[UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)

[ECCTIS - National Agency responsible for providing information, advice and expert opinion on qualifications worldwide](https://www.ecctis.com/)

[CMA - UK higher education providers - advice on consumer protection law](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428549/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf)

1. *The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is the official agency for collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative information about higher education. Performance Indicators provide comparative data on the performance of institutions in widening participation, student retention, learning and teaching outcomes, research output and employment of graduates. They cover publicly-funded higher education institutions in the UK.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *A young carer is a child or young person aged under 18 who has a significant role in looking after someone else who is experiencing illness or disability.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *A Care Experienced student is defined as anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked after background at any stage of their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked after. Care may have been provided in one of many different settings, such as residential care, foster care, kinship care, or looked after at home with a supervision requirement. There is no age restrictions on our definition of care experienced.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *An applicant who resides in Quintile 1 as defined by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *An applicant who resides in Quintile 2 as defined by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)