HSU HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

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Admissions Procedure for Applicants with Criminal Convictions

Contents

1. **Introduction** 1
2. **Scope** 1
3. **Responsibilities, Monitoring and Review** 2
4. **Key Principles** 2
5. **Procedure for Applicants who Declare an Unfiltered Criminal Conviction During the Application Process** 3
6. **Procedure for Applicants who Do Not Declare an Unfiltered Criminal Conviction during the Application Process (Courses with Regulated Activity Only)** 4
7. **Procedure for Applicants who have Not Received an Enhanced DBS Clearance or Panel Decision Prior to Enrolment** 5
8. **The Criminal Convictions Panel** 5
9. **Data Storage, Access and Retention** 7
10. **Appeals and Complaints** 8

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment Form for Applicants / Students with Unfiltered Criminal Convictions 9

Appendix 2: Admissions Workflow for Criminal Conviction Declarations 15

1. Introduction

1.1 This procedure outlines the process for managing declared or discovered criminal convictions held by applicants to Health Sciences University courses.

1.2 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure fair admissions while meeting safeguarding, legal, and professional obligations.

2. Scope

2.1 The procedure applies to applicants seeking entry to the University's taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including apprenticeships and pre-entry programmes. It includes courses delivered by Delivery Partners on behalf of the University. Where a specific post title is referenced, an equivalent or similar post will undertake duties where a student is studying at a delivery partner

2.2 All criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands or warnings) are considered in the context of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and the University will only consider relevant convictions.

2.3 For the purposes of this procedure, 'unfiltered' refers to convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings that must be disclosed under current DBS filtering rules. Further guidance on disclosures can be found on the GOV.UK website: Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 - GOV.UK

3. Responsibilities, Monitoring and Review

3.1 The Deputy Head of Admissions is responsible for the operational administration and coordination of this procedure, including the collection of relevant supporting information, the secure storage and retention of records, the recording and communication of outcomes, and ensuring that decisions are implemented in accordance with this procedure.

3.2 For courses delivered by the University, the relevant Head of School is responsible for ensuring that criminal convictions risk assessments are undertaken with appropriate academic, professional and practice-related expertise. The Head of School may nominate an appropriately qualified member of staff to undertake or contribute to an assessment.

3.3 Admissions and the relevant School will work together to ensure that this procedure is applied consistently and that appropriate professional expertise is available to inform decisions.

3.4 Where a course is delivered by a Delivery Partner on behalf of the University, the Delivery Partner will ensure that appropriate academic, professional and practice-related expertise is involved in any risk assessment or decision, in consultation with the University where appropriate.

3.5 The Head of Student Recruitment, Admissions and Outreach is responsible for ensuring this procedure is regularly reviewed to ensure that it complies fully with any changes in legislation and continues to support the vision and values of the University.

4. Key Principles

4.1 The University is committed to the fair treatment of applicants regardless of background. The relevance of a criminal record will be considered independently of the academic selection process.

4.2 Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an individual studying on a Health Sciences University course. However, the University must fulfil its responsibilities and obligations for the safety of the University communities and the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with whom students are in contact as part of their studies and work.

4.3 All applicants to Health Sciences University courses will be asked at application stage to declare whether they have any unfiltered convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings. Any cautions, reprimands, warnings, charges or convictions received after the point of application must be declared to the University or Delivery Partner immediately.

4.4 Courses offered by the University may involve 'regulated activity' such as clinical placements involving children or vulnerable adults and will lead to professions or occupations exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

4.5 The University has a legal requirement to ensure any students participating in regulated activity have undertaken and satisfied an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

check and applicants to relevant courses will be asked to complete this as part of the application process.

4.6 All offers for courses involving regulated activity will be conditional on completion of a mandatory satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check. The University reserves the right to rescind offers where an applicant does not engage in this process, or in the event that the results of the check mean the applicant can no longer be considered for the course of study.

4.7 All applicants requiring an Enhanced DBS Check are also required to subscribe to the DBS Update Service for the duration of their chosen course, and to declare any changes to their criminal record to the University.

4.8 Non-UK domiciled applicants and applicants who have lived outside of the UK for a period of 6 months or more in the last five years are required to provide a Police Check or equivalent for the country of residence.

5. Procedure for Applicants who Declare an Unfiltered Criminal Conviction During the Application Process

5.1 All applicants are required to declare any unfiltered criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings as part of their application or as soon as the conviction is known.

5.2 The University or Delivery Partner will initially review the application on academic grounds. This may include an interview to discuss their academic eligibility and motivations for study. If the University is unable to make an offer on this basis, it will not offer a place, and no further action will be taken.

5.3 If the application has been provisionally approved for an offer the admissions team at the University or Delivery Partner will check the criminal conviction declaration to confirm if a conviction has been disclosed.

5.4 Where a criminal conviction has been disclosed, the Deputy Head of Admissions (or deputy officer) will coordinate the collection of relevant supporting information. The information will be stored securely in accordance with Section 9. This may include:

- A statement explaining the circumstances of the conviction(s).
- An early Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.
- Any other information the applicant or university deems relevant.

5.5 The Deputy Head of Admissions (or deputy officer) will securely retain the information and notify the relevant Head of School or authorised nominee so that an initial risk assessment can be undertaken.

5.6 The relevant Head of School, or authorised nominee, will ensure that an initial risk assessment is undertaken with appropriate academic, professional and practice-related input. The assessment must be recorded using the University's approved Criminal Convictions Risk Assessment Form and must consider the potential impact of the conviction on the applicant's ability to participate safely and successfully in their proposed course of study.

5.7 Where relevant, the assessment will include consideration of safeguarding, participation in all essential elements of the course, access to required placements or practice-based learning,

professional standards, fitness to practise, eligibility for professional registration and any reasonably foreseeable implications for the applicant's ability to complete the course or progress into the profession or occupation for which the course is intended to prepare them.

5.8 Where the risk is assessed as low and acceptable, the completed risk assessment and recommendation will be returned to the Deputy Head of Admissions (or deputy officer) for secure storage and implementation of the outcome.

5.9 Where the initial assessment identifies a medium, high or otherwise complex risk, or where the relevant Head of School considers that additional or specialist advice is required, the risk assessment and supporting information will be referred to the Criminal Convictions Panel for further consideration.

5.10 The outcome of the risk assessment or decision of the Criminal Convictions Panel will be communicated to the Deputy Head of Admissions or deputy officer). They will:

a) ensure that the completed risk assessment, supporting evidence and, where applicable, Panel documentation are stored securely in accordance with section 9;

b) ensure the date and outcome of the decision is noted on the applicant's record, in accordance with the University's data storage and retention requirements; and

c) ensure the outcome is implemented and communicated to the applicant.

5.11 If the applicant is applying for a course through a Delivery Partner, the Deputy Head of Admissions (or deputy officer) will coordinate the collection and secure storage of supporting information and ensure that an appropriate risk assessment is undertaken in accordance with this procedure. The relevant academic, professional and practice expertise of the University and/or Delivery Partner will be involved as appropriate. The Deputy Head of Admissions (or deputy officer) will communicate the outcome to the Delivery Partner and ensure that the decision is recorded and implemented in accordance with this procedure.

6. Procedure for Applicants who Do Not Declare an Unfiltered Criminal Conviction during the Application Process (Courses with Regulated Activity Only)

6.1 The University or Delivery Partner will initially review the application on academic grounds. This may include an interview to discuss their academic eligibility and motivations for study. If the University is unable to make an offer on this basis, it will not offer a place, and no further action will be taken.

6.2 Where an applicant is academically qualified and the University wishes to make an offer, an offer is issued. The offer letter will state clearly that the offer is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check prior to enrolment.

6.3 Instructions for completing the Enhanced DBS Check and registering for the Update Service will be sent to the applicant approximately three months prior to the state date of their course once they have accepted their offer.

6.4 The applicant completes the Enhanced DBS Check and registers for the Update Service and the University or Delivery Partner Admissions team are notified of the outcome.

6.5 If the check does not discover any unfiltered criminal convictions the applicant will be permitted to enrol for their chosen course once all offer conditions have been met.

6.6 If the check does discover one or more unfiltered criminal convictions, steps 5.4 to 5.8 will be followed.

7. Procedure for Applicants who have Not Received an Enhanced DBS Clearance or Panel Decision Prior to Enrolment

7.1 In some instances, it is not possible to complete an Enhanced DBS Check or convene a panel prior to the start date of the course. However, applicants are expected to be actively engaging with the process before the following can be considered.

7.2 An applicant may be permitted to enrol and participate in non-regulated activity for their course at the University's discretion if the following applies:

a) They have not declared any criminal convictions to the university and there are no grounds to suspect criminal convictions exist.

b) They have completed their Enhanced DBS Check (if required) and are pending the result.

c) They have met all other conditions of their offer.

d) They have been made aware in writing that enrolment is conditional on the information provided in their application form, and that in the event that a criminal conviction is later discovered this will be subject to a risk assessment and potential withdrawal from their course.

e) They have been made aware that they will not be able to participate in any regulated activity for their course until a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check has been received.

7.3 In exceptional circumstances, if the applicant has shared a criminal conviction with the university but is still pending the results of an Enhanced DBS Check and/or a DBS Panel Risk Assessment, they may be permitted to participate in limited activity including Welcome Week, Induction sessions and non-regulated activity prior to fully-enrolling on their course. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Criminal Convictions Panel based on an initial risk assessment of available supporting information.

7.4 No applicants with declared or discovered criminal convictions may not be permitted to fully enrol on their course or participate in r activity until a risk assessment has confirmed it is appropriate for them to do so.

7.5 The decision to allow an applicant to enrol or participate in non-regulated course activity while an Enhanced DBS Check and/or DBS Panel Risk Assessment is completed will not prejudice the outcome of any subsequent risk assessment that may be required.

8. The Criminal Convictions Panel

8.1 The role of the Criminal Convictions Panel is to assess the circumstances of criminal convictions and determine whether, and on what conditions, it is appropriate for an applicant to be admitted to and participate in their chosen course. The panel will consider potential risks to the HSU community and, where relevant, to patients, service users, placement providers and the wider public. The Panel will also consider the applicant's ability to participate in all

essential elements of their chosen course, meet relevant placement requirements and satisfy applicable fitness to practise or professional registration requirements. Where reasonably foreseeable, the Panel will also consider whether the conviction is likely to create a material barrier to completion of the course or progression into the profession or occupation for which the course is intended to prepare the applicant.

8.2 The Criminal Convictions Panel assessment is separate to and distinct from any academic assessment of the applicant.

8.3 The Criminal Convictions Panel will normally comprise a minimum of three members with appropriate knowledge and expertise relevant to the case under consideration. This would normally include:

a) a senior representative of the relevant School, normally the Head of School or nominee;

b) an academic or professional representative with knowledge of the relevant course and profession;

c) the Head of Practice-Related Learning, Clinical Safeguarding Lead or another member of staff with relevant safeguarding or practice-related expertise; and

d) where appropriate, an external practitioner, clinician or other professional with relevant current practice expertise.

8.4 Admissions will normally provide procedural and administrative support to the Panel and may attend where appropriate. Admissions representation will not be required to provide professional judgement on matters outside its area of expertise.

8.5 Additional specialist advice may be sought where required to inform the Panel's decision.

8.6 The Panel will meet on an ad hoc basis as and when required. The Deputy Head of Admissions (or deputy officer) will coordinate the administrative arrangements for the Panel and ensure that relevant documentation is provided securely to authorised Panel members.

8.7 The Panel should convene no later than 10 days after the applicant has provided all requested supporting information.

8.8 The Panel will review the supporting information and risk assessment and consider, as relevant, the following:

a) the nature and severity of the offence(s);

b) whether the offences(s) are recent or historic;

c) whether they demonstrate a pattern of behaviour;

d) any mitigating factors and evidence of rehabilitation;

e) the potential risk to HSU students, staff, patients, service users, placement providers and wider community;

f) whether the applicant can safely participate in all essential elements of the course;

g) whether the conviction is compatible with relevant professional standards, fitness to practise requirements and, where applicable, eligibility for professional registration;

h) whether there is a reasonably foreseeable risk that the conviction would prevent the applicant from accessing essential placements, completing the course or progressing into the profession or occupation for which the course is intended to prepare them;

i) whether any proportionate and practicable measures could mitigate identified risks without compromising safety, professional standards or the integrity of the course; and

j) Whether any further information or specialist advice is required to inform a decision.

8.9 The Panel may request further information or specialist advice if required to reach a decision and will reconvene once this information has been received.

8.10 The Panel will record its decision on the Criminal Convictions Risk Assessment Form and agree one of the following outcomes:

a) Issue offer - the risk is assessed as acceptable and the applicant may be admitted to the selected programme or module, subject to the normal conditions of admission.

b) Issue offer subject to specified conditions or risk-management arrangements – the applicant may be admitted provided that clearly defined conditions or arrangements are proportionate, practicable and compatible with the requirements of the course, including any placement or professional requirements.

c) Decline admission – the identified risks cannot be appropriately mitigated, or the applicant would be unable to meet essential requirements relating to safeguarding, participation in the course, placement or practice-based learning, professional standards or fitness to practise.

8.11 The University's Deputy Head of Admissions is responsible ensuring the risk assessment is saved to the DBS Risk Assessment folder and that the decisions of the Panel are actioned and communicated for applicants.

9. Data Storage, Access and Retention

9.1 Information relating to the criminal convictions of applicants or students will only be accessed by authorised staff with a legitimate need to know for the purposes of undertaking or contributing to a risk assessment, reaching or implementing a decision, or providing appropriate oversight and assurance. The University will handle such information securely, keep it only for as long as necessary and destroy it safely when it is no longer required, in accordance with applicable law and data protection requirements.

9.2 Initial criminal conviction declarations made at the point of application will be stored securely on the applicant's file but will not be considered until an academic eligibility assessment has been concluded.

9.3 Any additional information gathered for the purposes of a risk assessment, including supporting evidence, completed risk assessments and Panel documentation, will be stored securely in the University's restricted-access Criminal Convictions Risk Assessment folder, separate from the main applicant file and student record. Schools undertaking or contributing to an assessment must return completed assessment documentation to Admissions for secure storage.

9.4 Access to the Criminal Convictions Risk Assessment folder will be restricted to authorised staff with a legitimate need to access the information. This may include the Deputy Head of Admissions, the relevant Head of School or authorised nominee undertaking an assessment, the Academic Registrar, the Head of Practice-Related Learning, the Student Governance Team and members of the Criminal Convictions Panel, as appropriate to the individual case. Access will not be granted routinely to staff who do not require the information for these purposes.

9.5 It will be stored for no longer than a period of 6 months after the date of the completed risk assessment in case of appeal, after which all information specific to the nature of the conviction(s) will be securely destroyed.

9.6 A minimal record will be retained for the purpose of audits, placement provider assurance and regulatory or legal challenge. This information will be retained in line with our Student Privacy Notice and will include:

a) Where a DBS check and/or Police Check has been completed and provided, the date of issue, the date this was reviewed and the certificate number.

b) The date of the risk assessment and/or Criminal Convictions Panel.

c) The outcome, e.g. 'Admission approved following initial risk assessment', 'Admission approved subject to specified conditions following Criminal Convictions Panel consideration', or 'Admission declined following Criminal Convictions Panel consideration'.

10. Appeals and Complaints

10.1 An applicant has the right to appeal against any decision by the university resulting in the rejection or withdrawal of the offer of a place where the applicant believes the University's policies and procedures have not been followed correctly.

10.2 Applicants wishing to appeal against a decision should complete the Admissions Appeal and Complaint Form found in the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and submit this to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days.

10.3 The Academic Registrar will investigate the appeal and aim to respond in writing within 10 working days.

10.4 If the appellant is not satisfied after receiving this response, they may ask for a further review by the Head of People and Development as per the University's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy.

10.5 Current students may appeal according to the relevant Disciplinary or Fitness to Practice Procedure. The student will be advised of the appropriate appeal process when they are notified of the decision.

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment Form for Applicants / Students with Unfiltered Criminal Convictions

Risk Assessment for applicants/students with unfiltered criminal convictions

Name of applicant/student:	
UCAS Number / Student Number:	
Course and Year of entry:	

Criminal conviction considerations

Details of the offence(s)	
Did the applicant disclose past convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings at the point of application or at the point at which any new offence was committed? If no, has the applicant/student provided mitigating circumstances for this? Please provide details.	
Are the offences be considered "protected" according to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 at the point of graduation?	
Has the applicant/student provided a statement regarding the offence?	
Has an Enhanced DBS Check been completed? Does this reveal any further relevant convictions not declared?	

Has the applicant/student provided any other supporting information? The applicant student may wish to provide additional information for consideration, including references from probation officers or former employers, evidence of rehabilitation etc	

Areas of consideration	**Notes**	**Risk Level**		
Nature of offence(s) • Did the offence involve harm to others? • Were they of a serious nature? • Are they likely to undermine public trust? • Are they incompatible with the professional standards expected of healthcare professionals?		High E.g. sexual offences, violence towards others, safeguarding offences (neglect, cruelty, abuse), serious exploitation offences (modern slavery, trafficking), serious hate crimes, offences leading to inclusion on a barred list.	Medium E.g. Dishonesty offences (theft, fraud, benefit fraud), Drug-related offences (possession - supply), public order offences (violent disorder, harassment), offences involving breach of trust, depending on context	Low E.g. Minor motoring offences, non-payment of fines, low-level public order offences (e.g. graffiti), historic minor cannabis possession, minor non-violent offences.
When was the offence committed?		High In the past 3 years	Medium Between 3 and 10 years	Low 10 years before

• Offences that occurred a long time ago may be less relevant than ones that are more recent. • Was the offence committed as an adult or as a minor? • Offences that took place a number of years ago may have less relevance now, with the exception of serious violent or sexual offences.				
What was the sentence?		High Custodial	Medium Suspended, community, conditional discharge	Low Warning, caution, reprimand, fine, absolute discharge
Is there a pattern of specific offences?		High Yes	Medium Some instances	Low No
Are you satisfied with the applicant/student's explanation of the circumstances of the offence?		High No	Medium Unsure	Low Yes
Have they provided any aggravating factors for the offence? (e.g. harm/exploitation)		High No aggravating factors	Medium Possible aggravating factors	Low Clear aggravating factors?
Has the applicant/student demonstrated reflection and a commitment to not reoffending?		High	Medium	Low

		No evidence provided.	Some reflection and commitment shown	Demonstrable reflection and commitment.
Additional notes				
Have character references been sought? Character references should be provided by someone who knows the applicant in a professional or academic capacity, i.e. not a family member.				
Is there any further information required to inform this risk assessment?				

Course, placement and professional implications

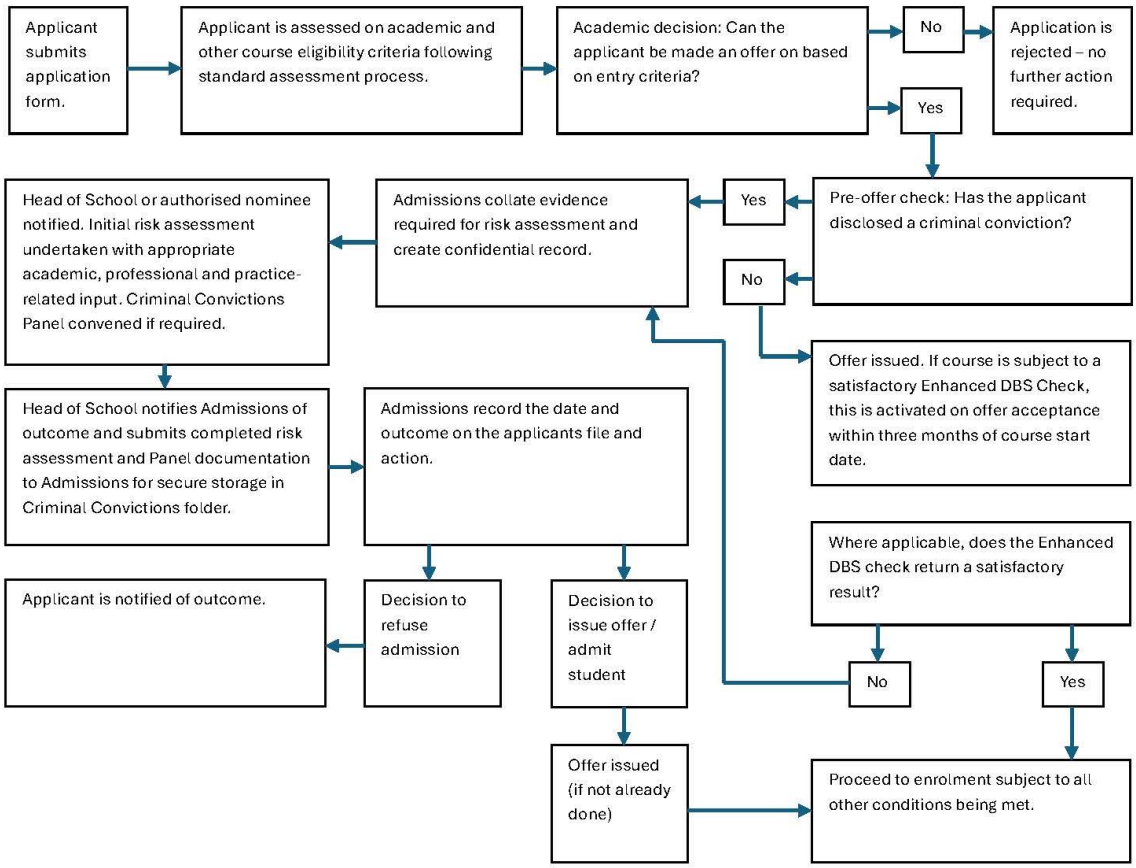
Course participation Can the applicant safely participate in all essential elements of the course? Are there any elements of the course that may present a particular safeguarding or safety concern?	

Placement and practice-based learning Does the conviction have any implications for the applicant's ability to access required placements or practice-based learning? Are there any known placement-provider or practice-setting requirements that may affect participation?	
Professional and regulatory requirements Are there any implications for relevant professional standards, fitness to practise requirements or eligibility for professional registration?	
Future progression Is there a reasonably foreseeable risk that the conviction would prevent the applicant from completing essential elements of the course or progressing into the profession or occupation for which the course is intended to prepare them?	
Advice and mitigation Has any professional, practice-provider or specialist advice been sought, and can any identified risks be appropriately mitigated?	

Outcome **This section must be completed by the person or persons completing the Risk Assessment**	
Issue offer / admit student – the risk is assessed as acceptable and the applicant may be admitted, subject to the normal conditions of admission.	
Issue offer / admit student subject to specified conditions or risk-management arrangements – the applicant may be admitted provided that clearly defined conditions or arrangements are proportionate, practicable and compatible with course, placement and professional requirements.	
Decline admission – the identified risks cannot be appropriately mitigated, or the applicant would be unable to meet essential requirements relating to safeguarding, participation in the course, placement or practice-based learning, professional standards or fitness to practise.	
Additional notes and recommendations Include any conditions or further actions here.	

Risk assessment completed by Please provide name and job title	**Date of decision**

Appendix 2: Admissions Workflow for Criminal Conviction Declarations



Version:	1.0
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