



# POINT BLANK

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# HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS POLICY

## 1. INTRODUCTION & PRINCIPLES

Point Blank is an international institution based in London. The school believes that opportunities to participate in higher education should be provided to all who demonstrate potential to successfully complete their chosen course of study regardless of their background. Point Blank recognises the benefits to the school and to the wider community, of recruiting a diverse population of students and we aim to widen access to higher education.

The Point Blank Higher Education Admissions Policy sets out the means by which we operate a fair and transparent admissions system for the provision of higher education. It relates to all higher education programmes offered by Point Blank delivered at the London campus or through distance learning. This policy details Point Blank's aims for the admission of undergraduate (UG) students and explains the guidelines, principles and processes which are used to select and admit new UK, EU and international students to UG courses.

Point Blank's higher education provision is validated by Middlesex University and this policy is based on the admissions policy and practice of Middlesex University. This policy is consistent with good practice for admissions in higher education as defined in the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code and complies with current legislation applicable to admission of students.

This policy is applicable to and reviewed annually by the Head of Registry and is approved by the Academic Board. The Executive Committee will approve changes to the policy which happen in-year. The Head of Registry and Admissions Manager undertake the maintenance of the policy and regular training is provided to all Admissions staff to carry out the procedures stated herein. If interpretation of any aspect of the policy is required, the final interpretation will be that of the Head of Registry (whose decision is final).

## 2. GENERAL ADMISSIONS REGULATIONS

This section relates to all Point Blank's higher education programmes of study, regardless of level or mode of study.

### 2.1 Selection of applicants

The school looks for motivated individuals with the necessary academic (and non-academic) preparation who will benefit from the school's learning environment and demonstrate they can successfully complete the programme of study.

The Head of Registry and Admissions Manager manage the fairness and consistency of offer making.

First and foremost, Point Blank is looking for people who can demonstrate a) a passion for music and b) an ability to successfully complete a Higher Education programme.

This criteria will initially be assessed through the applicant's personal statement which should detail any previous study or relevant experience in music. The Admissions Team will look at the merits of each applicant, taking the following evidence into consideration:

- Personal statement
- Predicted or previously-attained grades
- Examples of academic or creative work
- English Language skills
- Personal References
- Relevant work experience

Applicants may also be asked to complete an admissions task and/or attend an interview.

We require every applicant, whether applying directly, online or on paper, to apply using the name shown on your passport or birth certificate. This name will be used throughout their academic career and will appear on any printed certificates

## **2.2 Higher education entry guidelines**

To be eligible for admission to a programme of study at certificate level or above, applicants are normally required to have a minimum of BBC - BCC at A-level or equivalent (e.g. BTEC DMM - MMM).

- For Point Blank's Music Industry Management Degree, business or music-related subjects should ideally form a substantial component of Level 3 qualifications. If an applicant has no business or music-related subjects then we can accept an application (subject to tariff) if the personal statement indicates appropriate enthusiasm and an appetite for success within the music business. Applicants for this course will also require Maths grade C or 4 at GCSE or equivalent.
- Unconditional offers will be reserved for exceptional applicants who demonstrate their ability through examples of previous work and/or achievement in previous academic study.
- All applicants must be able to demonstrate English language at level B2, equivalent to grade C or 4 at GCSE (please see next chapter for more details).
- If an applicant has or is going to take an IELTS exam, the minimum level required is 6.0 (with 5.5 in every category). Only IELTS Academic tests will be accepted.
- Applicants without formal qualifications or who have achieved academic qualifications lower than required for the typical conditional offer may be considered on the strength of relevant prior learning and experience, demonstrated through an interview, written exercise and portfolio of work.
- International applicants and international qualifications will be assessed using Middlesex University's guide or third party comparison services such as NARIC.
- All applicants will be required to provide one academic and one character reference (who must be contactable by phone during the application process). References from family or friends will not be accepted.
- Successful completion of a CertHE or DipHE programme delivered at Point Blank would precipitate entry at level 5 or 6 on the BA programme.
- Places for Point Blank's higher education programmes are limited and offers cannot be made to every applicant that meets our typical entry requirements.

All offers of admission are subject to agreement to Point Blank's [terms and conditions](#), Student Charter, and any conditions as detailed in your formal offer letter issued by our Admissions Office.

## 2.1 Foundation Year entry guidelines

Foundation Year offers may be made to applicants who do not meet the entry requirements of our degree courses, have insufficient practical music experience, or have opted to take the Foundation Year as a personal choice.

To be eligible for admission to a programme of study at Foundation Year level or above, applicants are normally required to have a minimum of DD at A-level or equivalent (e.g. BTEC PPP, or Pass).

- All applicants must be able to demonstrate English language at level B2, equivalent to grade C or 4 at GCSE (please see next chapter for more details).
- If an applicant has or is going to take an IELTS exam, the minimum level required is 6.0 (with 5.5 in every category). Only IELTS Academic tests will be accepted.
- Applicants without formal qualifications or who have achieved academic qualifications lower than required for the typical conditional offer may be considered on the strength of relevant prior learning and experience, demonstrated through an interview, admissions task and portfolio of work.
- All applicants will be required to provide one academic and one character reference (who must be contactable by phone during the application process).
- Places for Point Blank's foundation year programmes are limited and offers cannot be made to every applicant that meets our typical entry requirements.

## 2.2 Interviews

In some cases, the Admissions Team will invite an applicant to interview, if it is felt that this is the best method of identifying potential for study or if further information about an applicant is required.

We define an interview as a discussion with the primary purpose of determining the academic suitability of an applicant prior to an offer.

All international students from outside of the EEA and EU will be interviewed as part of the admissions process. The interview will be recorded and securely stored for Home Office and admissions purposes only. The recording will be deleted one year post completion of the applicant's studies, or upon refusal, should the application be unsuccessful.

Interviews will be conducted via Skype, unless exceptional circumstances prevent this (such as a country has barred use of Skype etc.). The secondary option would be a telephone interview.

Interview questions will be pre-determined and consistent in their nature for all applicants.

Interviews will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time, where possible. If an applicant fails to attend an interview, it is at the discretion of the Admissions Team as to whether or not a further interview is offered.

If the Point Blank cancels or postpones an interview, we will offer a revised interview date.

If a candidate will be under 18 years of age at the time of interview, the applicant is welcome to invite a chaperone, or parent/guardian to attend the Skype interview.

Following the interview, the outcome, which will be as a result of an evidence-based decision, will be communicated as quickly as possible. The outcome will take the form of one of the following; an offer, a rejection, an alternative offer or request to complete an Admissions Task.

Feedback regarding an interview can be requested as part of a feedback request, as detailed in section 2.7.

## **2.5 Admissions Task**

In some cases, the Admissions Team will invite an applicant to complete an Admissions Task. The exercise may be issued at any stage of the application process.

The purpose of the Admissions Task is to ensure an applicant can show the requisite skills to meet the demands of the course for which they are applying.

The Admissions Team will email the Admissions Task brief to the contact details provided, along with submission guidelines and a deadline.

The deadline for completion of the Admissions Task will be no shorter than 5 working days, and an applicant may request one extension to this deadline if required. Any further extensions will be granted at the discretion of the Admissions Team.

Applicants who fail to submit their Admissions Task by the deadline may have their application withdrawn.

The Academic Development Team will review the submitted task and provide feedback within 7 working days. The outcome will assist in determining whether a candidate can gain access straight on to our degree courses, start from our Foundation Year course or should be refused a place on either pathway.

The task forms part of the wider application process, and all other methods of assessment (interview, personal statement etc.) will be reviewed alongside the task itself when determining the application outcome.

Feedback regarding an Admissions Task can be requested as part of a feedback request, as detailed in section 2.7.

## **2.3 Applicants' English Language capabilities**

In addition to academic entry guidelines, Point Blank requires all higher education applicants to demonstrate a level of English sufficient to allow successful completion of their chosen course of study.

All applicants must be able to demonstrate English language at level B2, equivalent to grade “C” or 4 at GCSE. This can be demonstrated by:

- i) reaching a satisfactory standard in an approved test in English as outlined in the ‘Middlesex University Approved English Language Tests’ list, or
- ii) the successful completion of a degree from an approved university (taught and assessed in English).

Some English qualifications have a limited validity period (e.g. an IELTS score is only considered to be valid for two years after the test has been taken). Applicants must ensure that their English qualification is still within the relevant validity period at the point their course of choice is due to commence.

If an applicant is deemed suitable for their chosen course of study but has not achieved the required standard of English, an offer may be made conditional on completing an approved test from the ‘Middlesex University Approved English Language Tests’ list to the satisfactory standard before the applicant’s course is due to start.

In addition to achieving the required standard of English (as determined by Middlesex University), international applicants who require a visa to study will also need to satisfy the applicable level of English (as determined by the Home Office).

Point Blank reserves the right to change minimum English Language requirements during an application cycle subject to any new compliance guidance provided released by the Home Office. In the event of a change in Home Office policy which affects entry requirements, the school will notify affected applicants (normally by email).

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019, if a visa student is required to submit proof of their English Language proficiency, we will accept the following qualifications:

- IELTS Academic – Minimum score of 6.0 overall, with at least 5.5 in each component (reading, writing, listening and speaking). This test must be less than 2 years old at the point of application
- GCSE - grade C / level 4 or above in English Language
- International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) - grade 5 or above in English Language
- Cambridge First Advanced Proficiency - 169 overall (no lower than 162 in each component). This test must be less than 2 years old at the point of application
- Degree transcripts - from a degree you have completed and passed, taught in English

## **2.4 Applicants declaring a disability or specific learning difficulty**

Point Blank welcomes applications from all prospective students including those who declare a disability. Application decisions are based on academic merit and likely potential as relevant to the course applied for, determined by published entry criteria and assessment as per the standard admissions process. Consideration of any support requirements will remain an entirely separate process.

Applicants who have declared a disability and are considered suitable for their chosen programme of study will be contacted to confirm their requirements. An educational psychologist report or medical report may be requested from the applicant. These reports do not form part of the academic selection process. If relevant and required, Point Blank will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of the applicant.

In the event that the adjustments needed to provide the required support could not be considered reasonable under the terms of the Equality Act, Point Blank may offer the applicants an alternative programme of study (if available) for which suitable adjustments can be made or may withdraw the initial offer. Failure to declare a disability or produce a report detailing sufficient information regarding the applicant's condition may result in withdrawal of the initial offer, if the school deems it will be unable to meet the support needs of the student.

In exceptional circumstances (for example late applications or complex reasonable adjustment are required) the applicant may be required to defer their place until the adjustments can be implemented.

## **2.5 Applicants requesting feedback**

The school will reject applicants that do not or cannot meet the school's entry requirements; (whether academic or non-academic). This can be difficult news for applicants to receive, but constructive feedback for the reasons of rejection is available on request.

For applicants applying directly to Point Blank, requests for feedback should be made in writing by the applicant to the Admissions Manager within two weeks of the decision. We aim to respond to requests for feedback within 15 working days of the request.

Where an applicant believes they have been rejected in error, or wishes to appeal the decision, they should refer to the 'Applicants complaints and appeals procedure' in Section 3 of this document.

## **2.6 Fraudulent Applications**

Point Blank requires all information submitted as part of the admissions process to be accurate, true and with no pertinent information omitted. Point Blank deems that the act of submitting an application constitutes the applicant's agreement to these terms.

The school deems the omission or failure to declare any qualification or period of study at other institutions to be an act of fraud.

Any application suspected of containing fraudulent information will be investigated by the Head of Registry and Admissions Manager. The school may refer the applicant to other agencies, including without limitation the UCAS Fraud and Verification Unit, the Home Office, The Student Loans Company, the Police, and Examination & Awarding bodies. In any such circumstances the school reserves the right to cancel the application.

Should Point Blank, at any stage of application or subsequent study, discover that an offer has been made on the basis of an application, which at any time is found to contain statements or refer to



documents which are fraudulent, untrue or misleading, or if relevant information has been omitted from the application, will reserve the right to cancel an application, withdraw an offer or refuse a student from studying at the school.

The school will not accept any subsequent applications, in any future year, from applicants who have had their application cancelled or where previously withdrawn, from either their study or application, due to fraud or misrepresentation.

## **2.7 Re-applications from previously registered students**

The school may consider applicants who have previously withdrawn for re-entry to Point Blank on the same or an alternative programme of study. As with all applications, each case will be considered entirely on its merit.

If an applicant has withdrawn from a programme of study and wishes to re-enter into that programme or a different programme of study, a new application is required and will be processed as such in the normal way.

If an applicant has had previous study terminated, or was in poor academic standing at the point of their withdrawal, the school reserves the right to not consider their application to any programme of study.

## **2.8 Application for deferred entry**

Point Blank understands that some applicants may wish to defer their entry to their chosen course of study.

In exceptional circumstances, applicants may request to defer their offer for up to two terms. This must be done in writing to the Head of Registry who shall reasonably consider the request.

Applicants wishing to defer for longer than two terms shall not be considered and should make an application in the requested entry cycle.

Applicants who request to defer their course more than once will be asked to make a new application.

The school would not normally allow applicants entering through UCAS Clearing to defer their entry unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## **2.9 Conditional offers**

Applicants who are made a conditional offer and who do not meet the conditions of their offer before their chosen start date may have their offer withdrawn. In any such case, the applicant may re-apply for their chosen course due to commence in one academic year's time. The decision will be at the discretion of the Head of Registry.

## 2.10 Contextual offers

Point Blank will use background data to assess an applicant's prior attainment and potential, in the context of their individual circumstances. The aim is to form a more complete picture of the applicant.

Contextual data includes educational, geographic and socio-economic background data, such as historic data about an applicant's school or college, polar quintile, parents' education level etc.

Point Blank may make contextual (lower) offers to flagged students.

Contextualised admissions can be used at different stages of the application process, as part of holistic assessment to inform a decision, including inviting for interview, contextual offers, and 'near miss' applicants at confirmation, and identify applicants who may need additional support.

The following contextual information will be taken into consideration and a student will be flagged if:

- The applicant attended a lower-performing school/college (list below)
- The applicant has been in care or looked after for three months or more
- The applicant's home postcode is in a Low Participation Neighbourhood (Polar 3)

[Contextual offers schools list](#)

[Polar postcode checker](#)

Students meeting one or more of the criteria above, may be eligible for a grade reduction of one grade below the standard entry requirements i.e. DMM = MMM and BBC = BCC

Contextual offers are not guaranteed. Each application will be treated fairly and judged on its own merit.

Contextual data is collected on the Higher Education Application Form or UCAS application form.

## 2.5 Foundation year offers and progression

Our degrees with a Foundation Year provide a supportive way for students to work towards one of our degree level qualifications. The Foundation Year provides an opportunity to learn academic writing skills, basic music production concepts, and will also cover a range of subject specific content to fully prepare them for entry to one of our undergraduate degrees.

If an applicant is offered a place on our integrated four-year degree with foundation year, the student will need to successfully complete the Foundation Year to progress on to the first year of their chosen Bachelor's degree.

If a student is unsuitable to progress to the degree course, either due to academic attainment or lack of engagement, this will decision will be final and the student withdrawn from study.

## **2.11 Verification of qualifications**

As part of the admissions process, all applicants are required to provide documentary evidence (for example certificates and transcripts etc) to demonstrate they have achieved the entry guidelines of their chosen programme of study and met or exceeded the conditions of their offer.

The school will accept scanned or photocopied documents during the application process and these copies must be of sufficient and satisfactory quality. All applicants must be able to provide original documents upon request and failing to provide such documents could result in a refusal of withdrawal of an offer. International students wishing to apply for a Tier 4 or Short Term Study visa will need to submit their original documents for their visa application before arrival at the school.

Point Blank will accept the secure online verification of qualifications either with the awarding body, or via a third party, such as UCAS. In any such case, documents are not required from the applicant. English qualifications (for example IELTS) can also be verified online using unique score codes. Point Blank will accept the unique code to verify a test score as part of the application process but may require a copy of the certificate to match the code, score and photograph prior to enrolment.

All qualifications completed and certified under a different name to the applicant's details as stipulated on the application form will need to be supported with documentation to evidence a legal name change (e.g. marriage certificate etc.). Applicants are advised to use their legal name throughout the application process.

Where an applicant submits documents in a language other than English, the applicant (at their own cost), may be asked to provide a certified translation with the original document.

## **2.12 Age of Applicants**

Point Blank admits students on individual merit and will not discriminate on grounds of age. The school is bound by Home Office rules regarding student visas; this means that the school is unable to sponsor (for visa purposes) students under the age of sixteen years.

Point Blank will not act in *loco parentis* for any student.

Where the age of an applicant would raise issues of safety, child protection, visa sponsorship, personal support or issues of care, the School Manager or their nominee, should be notified in order to invoke appropriate measures for investigation and assessment of the situation prior to an offer being made.

## **2.13 International applicants**

Applicants who require a student visa (either Short Term Study visa or Tier 4 Student visa) to study at Point Blank will need to be accepted on their chosen programme of study as well as meet Point Blank's requirements for their chosen visa.

Before an offer is made to an international applicant, Point Blank will confirm with the applicant if they are able to meet the requirements for the required visa. If an international applicant fails to meet the conditions of their offer or Point Blank does not believe the applicant meets the requirements for

the required visa then the applicant's offer may be withdrawn. In this instance an alternative offer may be made.

#### **2.14 The assessment and accreditation of Prior Learning**

Applicants who have previously completed a qualification at level 4 or 5 or who can demonstrate relevant experience may be eligible to start a programme at a different entry point. Applicants must also be able to show their qualification or experience has covered sufficiently similar subject material to that of the intended programme of study. Applicants will need to have successfully passed their previous years of study and must also have been awarded the requisite number of Higher Education credits, usually 120 per level of academic study. In these instances the application will also be considered by Middlesex University and the final decision will lie with the university. Point Blank will not normally accept applicants for direct entry where the applicant has been previously unsuccessful at that level.

#### **2.15 UCAS similarity detection**

UCAS, on behalf of all member institutions, checks all personal statements for plagiarism using the Copyscatch system. If these anti plagiarism checks find a significant level of similarity in an applicant's personal statement, UCAS will notify the applicant that a report detailing the similarities has been sent to all institutions to which applications have been made. Depending on the seriousness of the plagiarism, the school may request a new personal statement and/or reserves the right to reject the application without further consideration. Any appeal relating to accusations of plagiarism in a personal statement should be made directly to UCAS.

### **3. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

The school is committed to providing a fair and efficient admissions service and applicants will not be disadvantaged in any way solely for using this procedure.

Applicants have no right of appeal against a decision to not offer them a place at the school. Complaints against a decision may only be submitted on grounds of procedural irregularity, or if there is new information which may have affected the decision (with reasons why it was not made available at the time of application), or if there is evidence of any action or decision which is inconsistent with the school's Higher Education Admissions Policy.

A complaint must be made on an individual basis by the applicant. Complaints made by a third party will not normally be considered.

This procedure and any decisions made under the procedure do not automatically give legal rights to the complainant, nor place obligations on the school to pay compensation, either in respect of a decision made pursuant to the procedures or for a breach of the procedures.

### **3.1 Procedure - Informal Stage**

Most complaints can be resolved informally. Applicants should normally raise the matter within 10 working days of the action. The matter should be raised in writing or by e-mail to the Admissions Manager who will respond in writing within 20 working days.

### **3.2 Procedure - Formal Stage**

If the complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the applicant through this informal means, the complainant should then write formally to: Head of Registry, Point Blank Music School, 26 Orsman Road, London, N1 5QJ.

The letter should enclose copies of all previous correspondence; and explain why the applicant remains dissatisfied and the intended outcome.

The Head of Registry shall investigate the complaint with relevant staff and/or a third party if it is deemed necessary, and reply within 30 working days. The decision of the Head of Registry shall be final.

If an applicant is not offered a place on their chosen course, they may reapply for a Point Blank higher education course at least one year after Point Blank's receipt of their original application.

## **4. DISCONTINUED / CHANGED PROGRAMMES**

The school makes every effort to run all programmes of study as advertised in our portfolio. However, we may at any time make significant changes to the structure of the programmes or to discontinue a programme entirely.

Where changes are made we will endeavour to inform applicants as early as possible to minimise the potential disruption to the application process.

Where possible, we will offer an alternative programme in a similar subject area, or offer the intended programme of study at another entry year. If an alternative programme is unavailable or unsuitable or untimely for an applicant the school will support their substitution of choice to another institution.

## **5. STUDENT FINANCE**

Student funding from Student Finance is available for a range of Point Blank's Higher Education programmes. Students should note that for some courses, Student Finance may not cover the full tuition fees. Applicants can seek guidance from Point Blank for further information about course fees and availability for student funding.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure their eligibility for funding and students should contact the funding authority for their domicile before accepting an offer.