

USE OF SELECTION INSTRUMENTS – RULES OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

USE OF SELECTION INSTRUMENTS:

[Selection and Admission Policy \(MPF1295\)](#) section 5.25 states:

When a selection committee uses selection instruments, other than academic merit based on past results, it must follow the Board rules on the use of selection instruments unless otherwise authorised by the Board.

A. Interviews and Tests

1. When the relevant Resolution on Selection states that 'the Selection Committee will conduct interviews and tests' an applicant cannot be accepted without undergoing that interview or test unless:
 - a formal decision to waive the interview or test is made by the Selection Committee (not by an individual Selection Officer); and
 - the reasons for waiving the interview or test are noted in documentation attached to the application; and
 - all of the following conditions apply:
 - it is impractical to bring the applicant and Selection Committee together or convene an interview by other means during the period in which the selection decision needs to be made;
 - the applicant clearly exceeds the minimum standards for selection (especially, for the case of overseas students, the English language standard); and
 - there are no reservations expressed by the Selection Committee and no aspects of the application that require elucidation.
2. When the Selection Committee has decided that for a given intake the interview or test will not be required of all applicants, the interview or test cannot be required of an individual applicant unless:
 - the decision to interview or test is made by the Selection Committee (not by an individual Selection Officer); and
 - the reasons for imposing the interview or test are noted in documentation attached to the application; and
 - these reasons include the identification of matters that the Selection Committee believes require elucidation.
3. The applicant must be notified of the nature of the interview or test, its format, and broad issues likely to be relevant to the Selection Committee's judgement of its outcome.
4. To ensure consistency in selection an agreed method of scoring must be adopted for any given course and the results of the scoring formally recorded (with brief reasons for the scoring where feasible). Scoring methods do not need to be given to the applicant.
5. Applicants must be clearly advised how they can obtain a time for their interview or test.
6. Individual programs for which interviews or tests are prescribed, or permitted but not prescribed, may have additional special requirements for the structure and content of interviews and tests, or the way in which they are assessed.

B. Auditions

1. Auditions are to be regarded as tests and subject to the requirements listed for interviews and tests at Section A, above.
2. For musical auditions, clear advice must be given to applicants on repertoire, provision and tuning of instruments, provision of accompanists, and any responsibility for provision of music or texts consistent with copyright regulations either for their own use or the use of the assessors.

3. For theatrical auditions, or auditions for other forms of performance-based activity, clear advice must be given to applicants on repertoire or texts to be used, and any responsibility for provision of texts consistent with copyright regulations either for their own use or the use of the assessors.

C. Folios and Work Samples

1. Clear guidelines must be given to applicants and Selection Committees concerning presentation standards for folios and work samples. Selection Committees must assess content rather than presentation.
2. The University must be able to take appropriate steps to verify the authenticity of submitted work. Applicants who prefer not to have their current employers made aware of their application should be managed according to sections 4.70-4.72, Selection and Admission Policy (MPF1295). An explicit declaration that the work submitted is the original, individual work of the applicant is required. If the work is necessarily collaborative, the nature and extent of the applicant's contribution must be declared, and details of the principal collaborators also supplied. If there are restrictions on how long ago the work was done, these should be incorporated in the declaration.
3. Clear guidelines on the nature and extent of submitted work and assessment criteria must be provided to applicants. Selection Committees must document the criteria against which submitted work is assessed. Generally, submitted work is to be assessed according to its quality (including artistic merit, technical competence, or other attributes as appropriate), its extent, and its relevance to the proposed course or demonstration of potential to succeed in that course. Clear guidelines need to be given to applicants and to Selection Committees concerning presentation standards. In areas where applicants are expected to display significant artistic or creative ability, the guidelines for submitted work need not be unduly restrictive as to content, but should clearly indicate any limits on size, types of materials, and so on, that need to be imposed.
4. The applicant must be clearly advised of the way in which material submitted with the application will be treated subsequently. If the applicant has the opportunity to have the material returned, the manner in which it is to be returned, and the responsibilities for costs involved must be explained. If the material will not be returned, the applicant should know this before sending it.
5. Individual programs for which folios or work samples are prescribed may have additional special requirements for the structure and content of the folios or work samples, or the way in which they are assessed.

D. Work Experience

1. In Resolutions on Selection where work experience is specified, 'documented relevant professional or work experience' or similar phrasing is normally used. Applicants who prefer not to have their current employers made aware of their application should be managed according to sections 4.70-4.72, Selection and Admission Policy (MPF1295).
2. The applicant must show how the work experience is relevant to the program of study to be undertaken. Examples of what constitutes relevant work or professional experience for the discipline should be given, including the type of employer and the type of duties performed for that employer.
3. Periods of work experience are to be interpreted as full-time equivalent. It should be clearly indicated for each course in guidelines to the Selection Committee if fragmented work experience is not acceptable, or if it is to be valued differently from an equivalent period of continuous experience in a single organization. Applicants whose work or professional experience is part-time will require an appropriately lengthened period to ensure equivalence to the stated period of full-time experience. Unless otherwise explicitly stated, prescribed work

experience must be completed before applicants can commence studies in the course for which they are applying.

4. The submitted documentation must include the name of the organization, the dates of employment, and the nature of the work done. It is preferred that the documentation be provided by the employer or client, or able to be verified by contacting the employer or client. When references are supplied, these may be used to substantiate work experience claims made. When it is not possible for the University to verify independently that the submitted work or professional experience information is correct, the Selection Committee should normally require the applicant to submit a Statutory Declaration or equivalent certification that the schedule of work experience submitted is accurate.

Examples of documentation could include

- a Curriculum Vitae detailing the experience on which they are mounting their case;
 - a covering letter, making the case on how their background prepares them to undertake the course for which they are applying, particularly in terms of their existing discipline knowledge and/or skills, their success in previous study and their communication skills;
 - samples of relevant documents they have produced, and/or a folio of work if that is appropriate;
 - evidence of any study they have undertaken.
5. Applicants would need to present a case that demonstrated their capacities at graduate level. The particular features that might need to be addressed for any particular course might be different, but the professional experience would need to be marked by:
 - Substantial length: For a person to be given credit for professional experience equivalent to an undergraduate degree, the experience will have been extensive.
 - Continual advancement and high achievement: The applicant must have shown the capacity to advance constantly in their career, and achieve even to a point that is unexpected for a person without a degree. They will normally hold a position that requires the kind of skills we would expect a graduate to have or be producing work at a level expected of a graduate.
 - Relevance: Even with courses in which the entry requirement is “any undergraduate degree”, the applicant will need to show that their professional experience has some close connection with the award being applied for. The relevant practical experience will thus compensate for any lack of familiarity in dealing with abstract conceptualisation in the area. For courses in which a particular degree is a prerequisite, the relevance criterion must be very stringently and specifically applied.
 - Continual learning: The applicant will have shown her/himself interested in continual self-improvement by undertaking non-degree study to expand their knowledge and skills. They will have outstanding success in any courses they have taken, particularly where there is graded assessment. In cases where there is a particular degree required for entry, the knowledge gained from these courses will be explicitly mapped against the expectations of prerequisite knowledge.
 - High competence in producing documents: The applicant will have demonstrated competence in producing complex analytical reports, papers or other documents, using their literacy, numeracy and computing skills as required. This may be demonstrated either in documents produced in the course of their professional work, or in assignments produced while undertaking courses. In some cases, applicants will be asked to produce a substantial piece of writing as part of the application process. This may be required to be done under examination conditions. This may not be as relevant for some areas

where the assessment is largely practical (e.g. in some areas of the Arts), but even there, some demonstration of literacy competence will be required.

- Capacity to undertake research (for those entering research degrees): The applicant will have had substantial responsibility for major research projects, covering all phases of design, implementation and writing-up.
6. Individual programs for which work experience or professional experience is prescribed may have additional special requirements for the nature, documentation and assessment of this experience.

E. Referee Reports and Employer References

1. Where feasible, the reference or report is to be sent directly to the University by the referee independent of the applicant. Such references may be sent by post, fax, or e mail. Post or faxed employer references should bear the letterhead of the employer and be signed. Postmarks or sending fax numbers that are inconsistent with the letterhead details should be regarded as raising doubts as to the authenticity of the employer reference. References or reports sent by email should be sent from an identifiable email address consistent with the location of the referee or employer, and their receipt must always be acknowledged by email. When the reference or report is unable to be forwarded directly by the referee, as in the case of many international applications, the reference or report must be either:

- a signed original copy on letterhead paper; or
- a formally certified or notarised true copy of a signed original on letterhead paper.

References or reports sent by the applicant by fax or email are never acceptable. In the event of any uncertainty as to the authenticity of a report or reference for an applicant that the Selection Committee is inclined otherwise to accept, the employer or referee should be contacted to confirm that the reference is authentic.

2. Guidelines on the content of referee reports should be provided for the benefit of employers or referees in writing references, and to assist applicants in selecting appropriate referees. The following minimum standards apply in all cases:
- Employer references must contain or be accompanied by a position description or descriptions relating to the applicant's career with the referencing employer.
 - In personal references from mentors, professional colleagues or former employers, the workplace relationship between the referee and the applicant and the duration and closeness of the relationship need to be clearly stated.
 - The reference or report should address in some detail the competence and performance of the applicant.
 - References or reports that establish the relevance of the applicant's past employment or activities to the proposed course of study, or their continuity of purpose in seeking to undertake the course, are to be valued more highly than references or reports that do not address this issue.
3. In accordance with the University's legal obligations with respect to discrimination, comments in references or reports that are immaterial to the application must be ignored in assessing the application. These immaterial matters include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, gender, family circumstances, and age (as distinct from years of professional experience). However, statements that cast doubt on the integrity of the applicant or on their ability to conduct themselves within the expectations of the University in respect of academic integrity, ethical conduct, discrimination or harassment should be considered.
4. Individual programs for which employer references or referee reports are prescribed may have additional special requirements for the structure and content of the references or reports, or the way in which they are assessed. Applicants who prefer not to have their current employers

made aware of their application should be managed according to sections 4.70-4.72 of the Selection and Admission Policy (MPF1295).

F. Assessing Applicant Statements

1. When applying to the Board via Selection Procedures Committee for permission to use applicant statements, the relevant faculty or graduate school must explain clearly why the use of applicant statements will improve selection, how the statements will be used, and how they will be assessed. These details will not appear under the published Resolutions on Selection, but must be recorded by the faculty or graduate school. Since discipline preparation and educational background are assessed using other selection instruments, the applicant statement needs to address matters other than these to be an appropriate selection instrument.

Information in the applicant statement is generally unverifiable, and should not be used to elucidate, for example, information in the applicant's academic transcript. The use of applicant statements as part of a holistic assessment needs to be cognisant of the requirement for an objective assessment of the applicant's ranking and potential to succeed in the course, and must be publicly defensible.

2. Applicants must be informed about the relative importance of the applicant statement, its purpose, appropriate content, format and length. The statement is to be a statement about the applicant by the applicant, not by a third party, and must be the original and unassisted work of the applicant. The applicant must be required to attest that the statement is original, unassisted, and correct.
3. For each intake, the Selection Committee must be aware of the details for the use of applicant statements for the course that have been approved by Selection Procedures Committee, and must understand in which of the following ways the statement is used:
 - as a preliminary screening device;
 - as a primary selection instrument, with substantial weight in the selection decision;
 - as a secondary selection instrument, with small weight in the selection decision;
 - to break ties between comparable selectable applicants when selectable applicants exceed available places.

In a sequential selection process applicant statements may be used in two of these ways at different stages in the process.

4. The Selection Committee must understand how the quality of applicant statements is to be assessed and use a consistent agreed method of scoring statements appropriate to the way in which the statement is being used. Where it is not possible for the same individuals to read all applications, some application statements must be re-scored by additional Selection Committee members to verify acceptable consistency in assessment. Each statement must be rated by at least two Selection Committee members, at least one of whom should be an academic staff member, and a consistently applied method of determining final ratings must be used when committee members assign different scores to the same statement.

G. General Declarations by Applicants

1. Applicants will be given clear directions on the University's expectations on the accuracy and integrity of the application. Applicants are required to sign a general declaration regarding their application at the time of its submission. While the general declaration recommended below implicitly covers all aspects of the application, it does not remove the requirement for statutory declarations or equivalent statements detailed in some of the recommendations above, to deal with cases where normally available independently verifiable information is unable to be provided. The specific requirement for statutory declarations in those cases draws special attention to the matters covered.
2. The precise wording of the general declaration, that is either signed on paper or acknowledged

during an online application process, may be discipline-specific but the wording should conform to the following general principles:

- The applicant attests that all statements made in the application are correct.
- The applicant attests that all attached documents and all documents that they have arranged to be forwarded separately are authentic.
- The applicant understands and agrees that the University may contact listed employers, referees or educational institutions to verify details or seek further information.
- The applicant understands and agrees that the University may terminate enrolment for students whose applications or supporting documents are found to be false or to contain false information.
- Applications that seek to remove or modify any of these conditions should normally be immediately rejected.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	President, Academic Board	23 March 2015	23 March 2015	None – previously called (Student Application and Selection Procedure Schedule A – Use of Selection Instruments)
2	President, Academic Board	20 February 2020	20 February 2020	Use of Selection Instruments, A Interviews and Tests, B Auditions, C Folios and Work Samples, D Work Experience, E Referee Reports and Employer References and G General Declarations by Applicants.